THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

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IAF's Rafale fighter jet flies past Rajpath, during the 72nd Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Tuesday | PTI

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India celebrates 72nd R-Day

Showcases military might, cultural heritage at Republic Day parade

RAFALE AIRCRAFT MAKES DEBUT ON R-DAY FLYPAST

Rafale fighter jets took part in the Republic Day flypast for the first time as the armed forces showcased its T-90 tanks, the Samvijay electronic warfare system and Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jets on the 72nd Republic Day on Tuesday

17 tableaux
from states and Union Territories, nine from different Union ministries and paramilitary forces also took part in the parade

There were six tableaux of the defence ministry, including two by the Defence Research and Development Organisation

A FIRST ON MANY COUNTS

This year, attendance to the parade was limited due to the pandemic. Those below 15 years of age and above 65 were not allowed among the visitors at the venue

The contingents only marched a distance of 3.5 km instead of the usual 8.5 km and for the first time in 55 years

A 122-member contingent of the Bangladesh armed forces marched on Rajpath, carrying the legacy of legendary muktijoddhas, who fought and liberated the country in 1971

NO FOREIGN DIGNITARY ATTENDED THE JAN 26 PARADE

RAM TEMPLE REPLICA ON RAJPATH

Uttar Pradesh's tableau showcased the replica of Ayodhya's Ram temple

The bedecked tableau was fronted by a sitting model of Maharishi Valmiki and the temple model occupied a large portion on the rear side

ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE SHOWCASE THEIR STRENGTH

Army showcased its main battle tank T-90 Bhishma, infantry combat vehicle BMP-II-Sarath, mobile autonomous launcher of the BrahMos missile system, multi-launcher rocket system Pinaka, electronic warfare system Samvijay

The Navy's tableau at the Republic Day parade this year displayed models of INS Vikrant and naval operations that were conducted during the 1971 India-Pakistan war

The Air Force exhibited models of light combat aircraft Tejas and indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile Dhruvastra on its tableaus during the parade

SCALED-DOWN MODELS OF THE LIGHT COMBAT HELICOPTER, SUKHOI-30 MKI FIGHTER JET AND ROHINI RADAR WERE ALSO PART OF THE IAF TABLEAUX

A total of 38 IAF aircraft, include Rafale, and four planes of the Indian Army participated in the flypast

25,000
MAXIMUM SPECTATORS ALLOWED FOR THIS YEAR'S REPUBLIC DAY

The ceremony began with PM Narendra Modi laying a wreath at the National War Memorial. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, CDS Gen Bipin Rawat, Army chief Gen M M Naravane, Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh and IAF chief Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria were also present

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ WARANGAL ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Unprecedented violence in Delhi as thousands of people break barriers and take detours from their kisan tractor parade to enter the heart of the city, fight pitched battles with security forces; clamber up the historic Red Fort to fly their religious flag; one farmer dead, at least 86 police personnel injured

MOBS HIJACK TRACTOR PARADE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

REPUBLIC Day that is marked by pomp and show in front of stately government edifices and seats of power turned into a day of anarchy when thousands of farmers entered the heart of Delhi much ahead of the agreed time and after deviating from pre-determined routes.

What was promised to be a peaceful tractor rally at agreed routes was anything but that as the protesters, who outnumbered the police in all the three routes, defied tear gassing and lathicharge. They breached barricades and clashed with the police at several locations.

By the end of the day, one farmer had died, an unspecified number of them injured and 86 police personnel were hurt, some of the critically, the police said.

The farmers riding tractors, SUVs and two-wheelers breached security cordons and barricades, entering Delhi before 12 noon, the agreed time for their rally. The first breach happened from the Singhu border in north Delhi, when farmers forced their way through. This was followed by protesters entering the city from Ghazipur in East Delhi.

Once in the city, the protesters clashed with the police first in ITO, central Delhi. They used their tractors to break the police barricades. Buses parked in the middle of the road to obstruct them were vandalised and it was here that Navneet Singh, a farmer driving a tractor died. While the police claimed he died as his tractor turned turtle, the farmers alleged that Navneet was killed in police firing. The protesters draped his body in Tricolor and sat in protest for several hours in the middle of the road.

The scene then shifted to the historic Red Fort, where both sides fought pitched battles. Hundreds of farmers reached its rampart and hoisted their flag where the Prime Minister, every Independence Day, hoists the national flag and addresses the nation.

"About 200 artists and kids who got stranded inside Red Fort were safely rescued. These artists came here for the Republic Day parade. The police first took them to a nearby hotel in Daryaganj to have food and then carefully rescued them to their destination," said DCP North Anto Alphonse.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, the umbrella organisation of all the 40 farm unions, distanced itself from the violence and blamed anti-social elements. Later in the evening it said they had called off the kisan rally and asked all the farmers to return to the borders.

Joginder Singh Ugrahan, the leader of the biggest farm union, accused actor-singer Deep Sidhu for the violence and the flag hoisting at Red Fort. Sidhu was part of the election campaign team of Sunny Deol, BJP member of Parliament from Gurdaspur in Punjab.

A leader of the morcha said it was the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee that deviated from the agreed route. AIKS leader Hannan Mollah condemned the violence and said the farmers had been holding a peaceful agitation for the past several weeks. P7

Clockwise from left: Farmers gather at Red Fort on Tuesday; protesters clash with police near Mukarba Chowk; and an overturned tractor at ITO in central Delhi that killed its driver | PTI, SHEKHAR YADAV

Blow-by-blow account

8:30 am: Farmers begin tractor march at all three borders — Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur — much before the agreed time of 12 noon; break barricades, try to push across cement dividers placed by Delhi Police

10.50 am: Mob forcibly tries to enter Outer Ring Road, clashes with police; policemen resort to caning, firing tear gas shells

11.30 am: Farmers from Ghazipur enter Delhi via Akshardham flyover; mob breaks barricades, cement blocks, central median; faces police batons and tear gas

1.30-2.00 pm: Hundreds of people reach Kashmeri Gate; break barricades, enter Red Fort and hoist Khalsa flag and national flag at the pole where the PM hoists the Tricolour every Independence Day

1.00-2.00 pm: Another group reaches ITO crossing; clashes break out between police and farmers; buses, police vehicles smashed by the mob; a farmer dies after his tractor turns turtle as it rams into a barricade

3.00 pm-5.00 pm: Farmers staged a sit-in protest demanding justice, martyr status, apology from Delhi Police for the farmer's death

4 pm: Farmers removed from Red Fort

4.30 pm: Home minister Amit Shah reviews situation with Home secretary & Delhi Police

6.30 pm: Farmers disperse from ITO

7.30 pm: Samyukta Kisan Morcha calls off march

THE REPUBLIC DAY SHOCKER

Delhi Police registers 4 first information reports

The Delhi Police registered four FIRs in connection with the violence. "Three FIRs were registered in east district and one in Shahdara district on Tuesday," a police official said

Paramilitary deployment

A meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah decided to deploy additional paramilitary troops in the wake of the violence. Around 1,500 to 2,000 personnel could be deployed

Flagrant violation of terms for kisan rally

- Tractor rally was permitted to start only after official R-Day parade, but a section of the protesters jumped the gun
- Tractors violated the agreement on not carrying more than five persons
- No weapons were to be carried, another stipulation that was completely ignored
- Routes were clearly defined, but mobs took detours, violently confronting the police

INTERNET SERVICES SUSPENDED FOR 12 HOURS

The Centre suspended internet services in parts of Delhi, including Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri and their adjoining areas, for 12 hours from Tuesday noon. Internet clampdown was also ordered in Haryana

Shocking scenes in Delhi. The violence by some elements is unacceptable. It'll negate goodwill generated by peacefully protesting farmers. Kisan leaders have disassociated themselves & suspended #TractorRally
Amarinder Singh, Punjab chief minister

We strongly condemn the violence seen in today's protest. It is regrettable that the Central government allowed the situation to deteriorate to such an extent
Aam Aadmi Party

Actor Deep Sidhu incited the youth to take over the agitation and give it a different colour. He damaged our agitation. We don't know who they are working for
Joginder Singh Ugrahan, BKU (Ugrahan) chief

'Terrorists stormed Red Fort'

SHREEPADA AYACHIT
@ Koppal/Bengaluru

AGRICULTURE Minister B C Patil on Tuesday stoked a controversy when he remarked that terrorists, and not farmers, had stormed the Red Fort in New Delhi. He even went on to allege that Congress workers and Pakistan-backed terrorists, in the guise of farmers, were responsible for storming of Red Fort.

The National Flag and the Red Fort have constitutional special and sanctity and their insult, especially on Republic Day, is a black spot on India's democratic history. It is highly condemnable and the guilty should be brought to book, he said after unfurling the National Flag at the 72nd Republic Day celebrations in Koppal. P4

Women atop a tractor take out a rally in Hubballi on Tuesday to show solidarity with farmers protesting in New Delhi | DHEMANTH

With fewer tractors, B'luru spared

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

ON a day Delhi witnessed clashes, the tractor rally by farmers in Bengaluru passed off without any incident. Despite a protest against the farm laws on Tuesday, there were no traffic snarls in the city, thanks to the coordinated efforts of the city police and the neighbouring districts. After a recent protest by the Congress in support of the farmers' protest had caused traffic gridlock in Majestic and surrounding areas, it was anticipated that the tractor rally will create a similar situation.

To prevent such a situation, the city police had held several rounds of talks with farmer leaders. A senior police officer said that soon after the farmers announced the protest, meetings were held with some leaders. "They were told tractors cannot be allowed and we cannot have thousands of tractors entering the city at once. They were requested to hold a peaceful rally without tractors. But they didn't agree," he said. P4

EXPRESS READ

Second sero-survey begins in Karnataka

Bengaluru: The Health and Family Welfare Department commenced the second serological survey across the 30 districts of the state as well as eight zones of Bengaluru on January 25 to assess the exposure of the population to Covid-19. The sero-survey will continue for the next 10 days. P3

'KEEP VIGIL'

No scope for complacency in Covid fight: Governor Vala

In his Republic Day address, Vajubhai Vala also appreciated the govt's efforts in fighting the pandemic and emphasised the need to follow the existing protocols | P2

SPREADING GROWTH

Companies looking at hybrid model with facilities outside Bengaluru

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE new normal in work culture is here and, in all likelihood, it will stay for at least some time to come. Looking ahead, companies are considering a hybrid-model with smaller operations outside the state capital while retaining their major operations in Bengaluru. Many firms are exploring co-working spaces in other cities and towns outside Bengaluru even as they await the task force report, which is expected next week.

This is in line with the government's push to take IT/BT firms to other cities and towns in the state as part of its strategy to decongest Bengaluru and develop other cities. Though past governments have been stressing on setting up IT companies outside Bengaluru, there has not been much success. The latest initiative by the Yediyurappa government — Beyond Bengaluru — which was launched in November 2020, focuses on building an innovation and technology ecosystem.

A senior official from the IT-BT Department told TNIE that after they launched 'Beyond Bengaluru', they are in talks with a few companies that have shown interest in the hybrid model — a blend of offline and online working. While some employees will work from offices with physical presence, others will work outside Bengaluru — it could be from home or small work stations/co-working spaces, depending on number of employees. P5

Tech Scene

- 12.15L people directly working in various IT/BT and ITeS firms in Bengaluru
- 80,000 people working in IT/BT companies outside Bengaluru, including Mysuru, Mangaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad, Shivamogga, Kalaburgi and Belagavi
- Around 5L jobs estimated outside Bengaluru by 2025

India growth to be the world's fastest, says IMF

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday revised its India's growth rate projection for 2021 to a decent 11.5% from 8.8% it had projected earlier on the back of the country's "stronger than expected recovery".

It also improved its forecast for India's current fiscal to 8% GDP contraction from 10.3% negative growth projected in its October World Economic Outlook report.

According to the IMF, India is the only major economy in the world that can register a double-digit growth in 2021. China is next with 8.1% growth in 2021 followed by Spain (5.9%) and France (5.5%).

The latest projections give India the tag of the fastest developing economy in the world.

The projections are also in line with the Centre's assessment of a strong revival in the coming months, aided by the recent vaccine approvals.

After a stupendous rebound in 2021, the IMF said India's GDP growth is likely to slow in 2022 to 6.8%.

IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath said India seems to be having a faster pace of recovery than previously thought. P10

STEEP 35 PAISE HIKE IN PETROL, DIESEL PRICES

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

PETROL price was raised by 35 paise in the national capital on Tuesday, pushing it to an all-time high of ₹86.05 per litre. Likewise, the price of one litre of diesel was increased to ₹76.23 from ₹75.88.

Tuesday's petrol price is the highest ever recorded in Delhi, while diesel price is at a record high in Mumbai. In Mumbai, petrol and diesel prices were ₹92.62 and ₹83.03, respectively, on Tuesday.

It needs to be mentioned that bulk of the fuel price — 67% in case of petrol and 61% for diesel — goes towards taxes, dealer commission and freight charges. The base price remains below ₹30 per litre.

ALMANAC TODAY
Wednesday: 27/01/2021 • Year: Sarvari • Ayana: Uttharayana
Ritu: Himantha • Masa: Pausha • Paksha: Sukla • Tithi: Chaturdashi 12:27 am
Nakshatra: Punarvasu 3:29 am • Moon in Kataka Rashi • Rahukaala: 12:00 pm to 01:30pm
Gulikakala: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm • Yamaganda: 07:30 am to 09:00 am

WEATHER
MIN 14°C | MAX 29°C
FORECAST Sunny

Sunrise 6.46 am
Sunset 6.18 pm
Moonrise 5.03 pm
Moonset 5.25 am

• Republic Day dedicated to undying human spirit to fight pandemic • Bengalureans take out mask march to keep up Covid-19 awareness • Women lead RPF parade

NO SCOPE FOR COMPLACENCY IN COVID FIGHT, SAYS GOVERNOR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WHILE Karnataka has managed the Covid-19 situation well, and has taken up the vaccination drive, Governor Vajubhai Vala on Tuesday cautioned that there should be no room for complacency in the fight against the pandemic.

In his Republic Day address to the state, Vala appreciated the efforts of the State and Central Governments in the fight against the pandemic, but emphasized the need for everyone to follow protocols. "While we have turned the corner on Covid-19, there is no room for complacency, and we must continue to observe the SMS mantra of Social distancing, Masking and Sanitization." The governor delivered his address after the parade at the Field Marshal Manekshaw Parade Ground in the City. The celebrations were held by following Covid-19 protocols and there were no cultural programmes.

This year's Republic Day celebrations were dedicated to the undying human spirit triumphing in the face of adversity, wherein the government worked day-and-night along with people and succeeded in turning the tide on the Covid19 pandemic, he said. The crisis came as an opportunity to become self-reliant in manufacturing medical equipment, including ventilators, and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits in a big way, he added.

During the pandemic, financial assistance of Rs 5,372 crore was given to beneficiaries, which included farmers, workers from unorganized sectors, autorickshaw drivers, weavers and others, the governor said, while listing out various schemes and development programmes taken up by the government, including measures to help farmers. He said Kalaburagi and Chincholi APMCs (Agriculture Produce Market Committees) have been linked to the Central government e-NAM platform and measures were being taken to link three more APMCs in the state to the national platform. The National Agriculture Market (eNAM) is a pan-India electronic trading portal which networks with APMCs to create a unified market.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, senior officers from the State and Central Governments attended the Republic Day celebrations and elaborate security arrangements were made around the venue in view of the farmers' protest against the farm laws.

The Republic Day parade underway at Manekshaw Parade Grounds; (right) Governor Vajubhai Vala receives the Guard of Honour | SHRIRAM BN

WOMEN'S PLATOON LEADS THE WAY

For the first time in the history of Bengaluru Railway Division, a women's platoon of the Railway Protection Force led the R-Day Parade at the Railway Institute Grounds at MG Colony on Tuesday. The guard of honour was taken by DRM Ashok Kumar Verma. As many as 208 coronawarriors of the division were honoured for their service during the Covid crisis and given certificates and silver coins.

CISF DISPLAYS SKILLS AT AIRPORT

A floral representation of the Tricolour was created in 'The Quad' area of the Kempegowda International Airport to mark the Republic Day on Tuesday. Gunjan Krishna, Commissioner of Industrial Development and Industries and Commerce Director, unfurled the National Flag to mark the occasion. A Central Industrial Security Force team displayed its skills

Groups campaign for masks and marshals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

REPUBLIC Day was yet another occasion for social-minded groups to get together and call upon Bengalureans to don masks and ensure their safety as well as that of others. The need to respect BBMP marshals enforcing such rules was also on the agenda.

Nearly 100 individuals from 12 groups got together at Anil Kumble Circle and waved 50 huge national flags, carried placards on the need to wear masks and staged a 'Maskup Walkathon' up to the War Memorial on Brigade Road. The campaign began at 4pm and wound up at 6pm. Many curious onlookers were spotted taking selfies and videos of this motley group as they walked along.

BBMP Marshals, Changemakers for Bengaluru, PACT, On The Buzz, The Indian Ploggers Army, Green Army Force, Civil Defence Team, Sakkhi, SWAT, Bengaluru Huduguru and Bengaluru Nagarika Samiti were involved in the campaign.

D S Kiran Kumar of the Green Army Force told TNIE, "This is our 18th campaign in Bengaluru to urge citizens to be responsible and wear masks, use of sanitiser and maintain social distance. Though we usually conduct campaigns on Saturdays, we decided to hold one today to reach out to large numbers who visit MG Road and Brigade Road on a holiday."

Kumar also said that of late, there has been much criticism of marshals for penalising those not wearing masks. "We wanted to sensitise everyone on the critical role they are playing," he added.

Citizens march with masks to raise Covid awareness | EXPRESS

School fee cut in two days; parents, schools disagree

PEARL MARIA D'SOUZA @Bengaluru

ALL eyes are on Primary and Secondary Education Minister Suresh Kumar's decision on the reduction in school fees, with this academic year almost coming to a close. A decision is likely to be out in the next two days, according to a top source in the education department.

Talks are on to reduce fees by up to 30%, applicable across boards – SSLC, CBSE and ICSE – besides discussions with parents' associations and private school managements, with the latter two pulling in different directions on fee reduction.

Private schools fear that reducing fees will hamper their ability to pay teachers' salaries. General secretary of Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka (KAMS) Shashi Kumar wondered on what basis the government was reducing fees, and which factors would determine the percentage of cut. The 30% reduction will proportionately impact salaries of

teachers – if 25% fee is reduced, teachers will get only 75%."

Kumar said that if out of school transfer, admission deficits and RTE students are taken into account, the 30% fee reduction would actually come to 43.26 per cent. Parents are not averse to paying teachers' salaries, and expenditure on actual costs, parents' associations say.

"As exams are drawing close, schools are seeking complete fees, and the government's delay in announcing the fee cut is not helping," said Shakeel M, who represented a parents' forum on the fee issue before Kumar.

Parents said they can pay for legitimate salaries, provided it reaches the staff, but an average 25% of teaching and non-teaching staff have been terminated, and remaining staff are paid an average 50 per cent salary or even less, based on the number of online class hours, which amounts to salary expenditure of merely 37.5% or even less.

Parents feel that 'Term Fee' levied at 10% of tuition fees for extracurricular activities and other "unlawful fee heads" must not be collected, nor for sports, cultural activities, school magazines, library, lab, transport etc, as schools are closed. Special Development Fees, capped at Rs 2,500, must not be collected either.

Parents started an online petition after the government's delay on directions to reduce fees. "It's been 10 days since the Public Instruction Commissioner met parents' associations. Now, there are phone calls saying if 75% total fee is not cleared by January 31, 2021, children will not be allowed to sit for pre-boards," said another parent, and member of the parents' association.

PAST SIGHTINGS OF LEOPARDS

DEC 2020
Veerabhadra Nagar, near Girinagar

MAY 2020
Kotuganahalli, Tavarekere police station limits

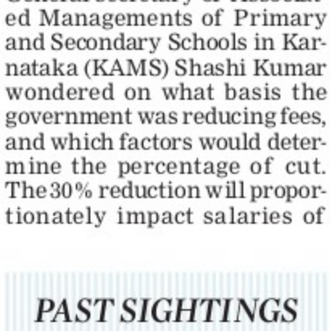
MAY 2020
Kadarayanapalya

MARCH 2020
Karihobanahalli, near Peenya

2019
Vidyaranyapura

2016
Vibgyor School, Whitefield

2018
Wonderla, Bengaluru-Mysuru Road



IS THERE A SECOND LEOPARD IN N BEGUR?

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

WHILE residents of Prestige Song of the South N Begur are yet to come to terms with the leopard wandering in the vicinity, the Forest Department has found a set of pug marks some distance away, raising the question of whether another big cat is on the prowl.

The pug marks, 500 metres away near Hiranandani apartment complex near Hulimavu lake, has forest officials wondering whether it is the same leopard sighted in Begur. If so, the animal could be heading towards Bannerghatta National Park. Forest officials are undertain as the animal has not been caught on CCTV cameras, nor on camera traps installed near the apartment. The drones deployed to track the animal on Monday did not serve any purpose. "The pug marks are being matched. We assume that the leopard could have crossed the vacant sites near Prestige apartments, passed the Hiranandani apartments and moved towards BNP. The location is around 2-3 km from BNP," an official told TNIE.

"However, doubts are being raised on the chances of two leopards being present as there is no witness who would have seen the leopard crossing the area and we haven't found any track mark yet. It is also possible that the leopard could have taken a different route," the official said.

A senior forest official said they are now working with the Mines and Geology and Revenue departments to track abandoned quarries, which are ideal leopard habitats.

While they have started the exercise in Chamarajanagar, Tumakuru and Chitradurga districts, they are yet to begin in places around Bengaluru, Ramanagara and Mandya, where the problem is increasing.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

27th January: I promised I'd tell you about one of the greatest problems in time travel - the 'Grandfather Paradox'. This states that nobody can travel back in time because of the risk that they'd kill their grandfather and hence could never have existed to travel back in the first place. As it stands the best way to mess around with the mysteries of time is to study astrology!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Surprises should soon start coming thick and fast. How about a spot of emotional and spiritual spring-cleaning? More than that, how about picking up on an ambition which you have done nothing about for far too long? Life is not a rehearsal - so get on with it!

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
I doubt if you'll have much time left over after all the routine chores have been completed and cleared up. One particularly important piece of advice is to watch your health. The last thing you want to do now is wear yourself out. If you're flat on your back, you'll be no use to anybody!

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You do not need reminding to keep on the straight and narrow. Enjoy yourself by all means, but remember that children and younger friends may be looking to you for support. A family gathering or party could be a good idea, just as long as you agree with partners on what's required.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
How far can you go? And will it be worth it when you get there? These are the sort of questions you should be asking yourself at the moment. If you can enlist partners' support it will all be so much more straightforward. But, then, isn't that always the case?

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Don't compare your troubles to other people's. I know that a lot of you have much to grumble about, but if you would open your eyes you'd see just how hard associates are trying to cheer you up. Actually, everything depends on whether you like hard work or not. If you do, you'll get on just fine!

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
If you have a problem now, it may be related not so much to your own mistakes, as to a temporary hiccup in circumstances. Give yourself a break. If you think about it, there are now certain commitments which can look after themselves. And you can look after yourself!

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
Hopefully, you are now aware of a general air of anticipation and excitement. If you can put daily cares to one side and tune in to the higher planetary energies, you'll realise that one phase of existence is coming to an end. And the good news is that another is beginning.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
Don't close the shutters and bring down the blinds just yet. No sooner has the curtain been drawn on one cycle of existence, than a new one will begin. Listen to your conscience and the future will be bright. Plus, you may be interested to know that today is a grand moment for making final, financial choices.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
I know you've had a thousand and one practical details to preoccupy you, but if you can lift your eyes to the heavens, you'll focus on the broader picture. A whole host of trivial problems will fall into perspective at last. I know it's an effort but it will be worth it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
You have been receiving confusing and conflicting signals but, within a few days, everything should be clear. Symbolically, today is a time to hibernate, so don't let anyone force your hand. After all, the moment you drop your guard, a rival or colleague could seize the initiative.

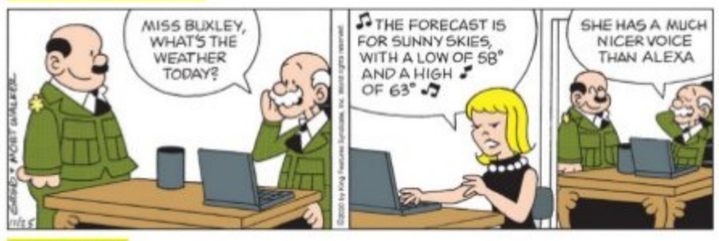
AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
It's ethical issues which raise their heads now. Question whether what you're doing is right and, if it's not, take the appropriate action. If you have a choice, go for the adventurous prospect. But make sure that you leave absolutely no loopholes whatsoever!

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Nothing is quite as it seems. Keep all your options open and don't worry if you run into delays. If you've big meetings or important enterprises to conduct, go for midday as the optimum time - and make sure you prepare your ground carefully. Plus, be prepared to put in extra effort.

THE PHANTOM

HI AND LOIS

BEETLE BAILEY


MISS BUXLEY, WHAT'S THE WEATHER TODAY?
♪THE FORECAST IS FOR SUNNY SKIES, WITH A LOW OF 58° AND A HIGH OF 63°♪
SHE HAS A MUCH NICER VOICE THAN ALEXA

BLONDIE

I RAN INTO MR. BEASLEY AT LOU'S DINER TODAY
OUR MAILMAN MR. BEASLEY?
YES, HE HAD THE DAY OFF AND HAPPENED TO GO TO LOU'S FOR LUNCH
SO, DID YOU HAVE A NICE CHAT WITH HIM?
SURE, IF YOU ENJOY TALKING ABOUT RARE STAMPS FOR A WHOLE HOUR!

LOCKHORNS

DENNIS THE MENACE

Test your number crunching skill with our unique puzzle

SUDOKU

1	5		3			7		2
	6	7					5	
		3		7		6	9	1
		1		9	2			6
			4		6			
3			7	1		8		
7	3	5		4		2		
	4					1	7	
2		9			7		4	5

EASY

- Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.
- Each sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing.

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

7	3	8	6	1	4	9	2	5
6	4	2	7	5	9	8	1	3
1	9	5	8	3	2	4	7	6
4	5	1	9	8	6	7	3	2
9	8	7	3	2	1	5	6	4
3	2	6	5	4	7	1	9	8
8	1	3	2	7	5	6	4	9
5	7	9	4	6	3	2	8	1
2	6	4	1	9	8	3	5	7

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SYLYH

ODMME

RRHOBA

FIYNAM

You guys have this down.
We run a tight ship.
Is this where I pick up my outfit?
Yes! May I have your name? Then I'll show you where to go.
THEY DISTRIBUTED THE HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS' NEW UNIFORMS IN AN ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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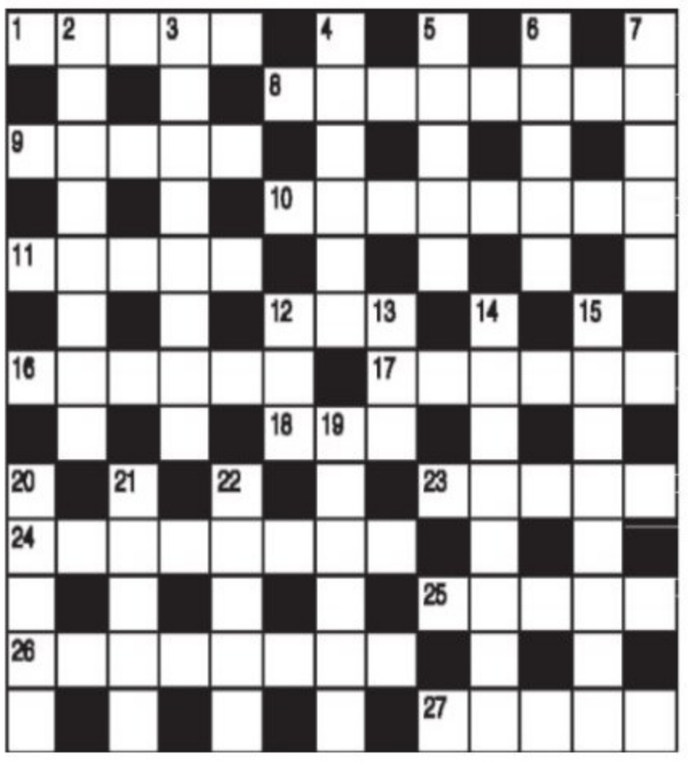
(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DITTO EVENT BOUGHT CEMENT
Answer: Because the abacus was old and falling apart, it couldn't -- BE COUNTED ON

CROSS WORD



ACROSS

1 Quiet individual excelled (5)
8 Each girl has to be cast in supporting part (5,3)
9 I am a long time getting the likeness (5)
10 We are its ruin, so to speak (2,2,4)
11 What's turned out to be a cut of a scythe (5)
12 It may be sweet to eat - or not (3)
16 High spirits (6)
17 Draw some crude pictures (6)
18 Nigerian tribesman reflecting native charm (3)
23 Fast ships (5)
24 None here is sane (3,5)
25 Begins with writers on love (5)
26 Not to be taken as shy (8)
27 Prompt about going on day-shift (5)

DOWN

2 Household chores for children to do (8)
3 Drink to celebrate retirement? (8)
4 Very good note by Charles (6)
5 Said in France to be the same (5)
6 The Spanish boy gets the girl (5)
7 Giants in the gorse possibly (5)
12 Afterthought I added in a letter from Greece (3)
13 A to-do? Yes (3)
14 Very good order for dessert (5,3)
15 Shown or hidden (8)
19 Excluded the said poet (6)
20 Bares disguised weapon (5)
21 Ignition takes place at this point (5)
22 Brief electricity failure (5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Alleviated, 6 Cold, 10 Tempo, 11 Dog kennel, 12 Nuisance, 13 Throb, 15 Animate, 17 Scamper, 19 Reefers, 21 Pierrot, 22 Roast, 24 Identify, 27 Underdone, 28 Pilau, 29 Dash, 30 Stretch out.

Down: 1 Asti, 2 Limousine, 3 Viols, 4 Andante, 5 Eaglets, 7 Owner, 8 Deliberate, 9 Test case, 14 Fairground, 16 Aperture, 18 Portfolio, 20 Spin out, 21 Precede, 23 Aides, 25 Topic, 26 Suit.

Foresters have attributed the "mysterious" death of a leopard on the Baad beach in Kumta taluk on Monday evening to drowning while hunting fish in the sea. The leopard was found dead on the beach late that night and there were neither external injuries on it nor were there any telltale marks of it having been poisoned

2ND SERO-SURVEY TO COVER 35K PEOPLE

Study to be held in 30 districts, 8 zones in Bengaluru; first survey found 27.3% had Covid-19

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Department have commenced the second serological survey across the 30 districts of the state as well as eight zones of Bengaluru on January 25 to assess the exposure of the population to Covid-19.

A serological prevalence survey involves drawing blood samples to detect whether an individual has been exposed to the infection in the past and whether he or she has developed Immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies to combat the infection.

In September 2020, 16.4 per cent of people surveyed had antibodies against Covid

The first survey done in September found that 16.4 per cent of the 16,585 people surveyed had developed antibodies and 12.7% had an active infection. The survey — that included people who had Covid-19 infection (prior to the survey) and those who had active infection during the survey — found an overall prevalence of 27.3 per cent in Karnataka.

According to health officials, the sample size from each district has been increased to 1,500 compared to 400 studied in the first survey. This time, the department intends to cover 35,000 people belonging to high, moderate and low-risk categories.

"The survey began on Monday and will continue for the next 10 days. Blood samples will be collected in 30 districts and eight zones of Bengaluru. The survey is expected to be completed within the next 10 to 15 days," said Dr Ravi, former head of the Department of Neurovirology at NIMHANS and also member of the State's Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee.

Dr Manjunath, Director, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology, said the results of the second survey would help us to know whether the state was heading towards herd immunity or not. "We had expected Karnataka to witness a surge in the number of cases after major events like the bypolls, GP elections, Dasara, Deepavali and Christmas where we saw huge gatherings and violation of Covid-19 norms. However, there was no surge in cases ... this could also be due to the fact that a large extent of the population could have already been exposed to the virus. The second survey will help us to determine this," he added.

According to experts, a population is said to have attained herd immunity if 50 to 60 per cent of the people are found to have developed anti-bodies during a seroprevalence survey.

Herd immunity implies that in any set of people in a community, after becoming affected by the virus, a lot many of them become immune to it on account of anti-bodies developed in response to it. And, hence, such people become a protective layer between the infected person and the unaffected people, thereby breaking the chain of viral transmission.

"The State government must conduct another round of sero-survey after this to determine the extent of the spread of Covid-19," Dr Giridhara Babu, Senior Epidemiologist and Task Force member, said.

JAB FOR THE WARRIOR

It was only a minute's pain I faced when I took the vaccine on the day it was launched at Jewargi. I was mentally prepared to take the shot on the first day itself to encourage health care workers and others to take vaccination without any fear. There was no body pain or any other side-effect till date. The health care workers who have personally observed me, volunteered to take vaccination in Jewargi taluk. In the last 5 sessions, more than 1,000 of around 1,300 health care workers of Jewargi taluk have taken the dose and in the vaccination session to be held on Wednesday, Jewargi may reach over 90% coverage

Dr Siddu Patil, Taluk Health Officer, Jewargi taluk

The pandemic has disrupted routine life. Patients with critical clinical problems have not been able to receive appropriate timely treatment. In this unfortunate scenario, the vaccine has truly been a boon. Systematic and effective vaccine delivery despite innumerable logistical hurdles to health care workers is a remarkable feat and needs to be lauded. I was hospitalised with Covid in October 2020 and recovered after two weeks. I got my first vaccine dose last week at my work place and it was a pleasant experience. I would unequivocally advocate the vaccine for universal administration as and when it becomes available on a wider scale

Dr Mohan Keshavamurthy, Director Urology, Fortis Hospitals

RECOVERED COVID PATIENTS MAY BE IMMUNE TO NEW VIRUS STRAINS

IFFATH FATHIMA @Bengaluru

A recent study published in Nature found that the immune systems of people who recover from Covid-19 may evolve to fight different strains of SARS-CoV-2.

Experts in Karnataka explain that it could occur as the memory B cells of the immune system remember the nature of the virus and are likely to modify their response if they encounter a variant of SARS-CoV-2 that is different from what they had already contracted.

The paper, titled Evolution of antibody immunity to SARS-CoV-2 and published on January 18, noted that antibodies are produced by immune cells that keep evolving due to continued exposure to remnants of the virus hidden in the gut tissue. The scientists involved in the US study said they suspect that when recovered patients encounter the virus again, the response would be both faster and more effective, preventing reinfection and may block even mutant forms of the virus, such as the South African variant.

In addition to antibody-mediated immunity, the body also has cell-mediated immunity, said Dr Ranjit Mohan, consultant for internal medicine and infectious diseases at

Manipal Hospitals.

"It is the memory B cells of the body's immune system that are responsible for the development of a robust and durable immune response to viral infections or vaccination. Such primed memory B cell populations may persist for years, or even decades within the lymphoid organs of the body, providing a robust and enduring immunity upon re-exposure. Since viruses have evolved to mutate frequently, human memory B cells have also evolved to modify and adapt to counter mutant strains of viruses," said Dr Mohan.

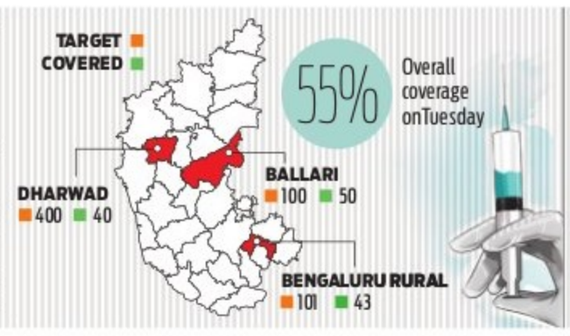
Dr Ravindra M Mehta, senior consultant and head of pulmonology and interventional pulmonology at Apollo Hospitals Jayanagar, said, "Some level of protection will remain with the person (after exposure), as far as virology knowledge is concerned, unlike (antibody response to) bacterial (infection), which is specific to a certain mutation. So we expect that the immune response should be okay even to the mutant strain, this is certainly only an expectation, it cannot be validated until we go through the whole process."

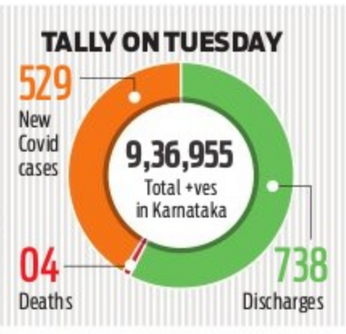
Antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 wane over time, but B cells do retain the ability to target spike protein of the virus (the spike proteins on the surface of SARS-CoV-2 attack and gain entry to human cells), said Dr Swati Rajagopal, consultant for infectious diseases and travel medicine at Aster CMI Hospital.

"The immune response in humans is different to serum-based neutralization response. There is still immunity with current vaccines - good level of protection. It is possible that the human immune system can create memory B cells that recognize the Covid-19 virus and immediately release antibodies on encountering the virus for a second time. This is based on findings that the virus could multiply in several tissues of the body including upper respiratory tract, the gastrointestinal tract and could help in producing memory B cells," she said.

INOCULATION DRIVE

Vaccination was carried out only in five districts on Tuesday – Ballari, Hassan, Dharwad, Raichur, and Bengaluru Rural. Due to Republic Day celebrations, vaccinations was not carried out in many districts





PUBLIC NOTICE

BHARAT PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED (BPCL), a Company incorporated under the Indian Companies Act 1913 is intending to take on lease the vacant land in **Survey No. 350/10 (Old Sy No. 350/1A) at Kalludi Village, Kasaba Hobli, Gowribidanur Taluk, Chikkaballapura District, Area 30X30 Mts (Approx 10,000 Sq ft) out of 2acres 19 guntas from its owners Sri. N. Babanna,** S/o Late. T. Narasaiah and **Smt. A. Suvarna**, W/o N. Babanna both R/a No. 142, 6th main, 4th cross, Postal colony, Sanjaya nagar, Bangalore- 560 094, bounded on the **North:** Sy No. 350/1B(Subbaramappa & Jayaramappa), **South:** Remaining Portion of Sy No. 350/10, **West:** Remaining Portion of Sy No. 350/10, **East:** SH-9 Road, for a period of 30 years. If any person or entity (organized or unorganized) other than Karnataka State Government is having any right or claim in any manner over the said property the same may be intimated to BPCL in the following address ***within 7 days*** from today.

TM Bengaluru,
7th Floor, DU Pare Trinity,
12, MG Road, Trinity Circle,
Bengaluru-560001, Ph: 9448282931

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to all the concerned that the landed property, mentioned in the Schedule, written hereunder, is absolutely owned and possessed by Smt.VEENA B.V. The said owner has agreed to sell the Schedule Property to my client and thus the deal has been concluded by and between the parties.

The above said Owner assured my client that above named Owner is only the owners and the claimants in the Schedule Property and except above said Owner there is/are no other rights/interest holder/s in the Schedule Property. Further assured that she has not entered into any arrangement, agreement of commitment, Memorandum of Understanding, Sale Deed, Agreement of sale, lease, Gift, Mortgage, Joint Venture, Joint Development Agreement, Court Proceedings etc., in respect of the Schedule Property nor created any third party rights in respect of Schedule Property or any part thereof and also assured that the Schedule Property is clean, clear, marketable and unencumbered.

Any person/s and/or company or anybody having any objections, disputes, claims/rights by way of sale, agreement, mortgage, lease, lien, gift, easement, exchange, possession, adverse possession, encroachment, inheritance, succession, memorandum of understanding or otherwise, howsoever in respect of the Schedule Property, the same be informed to the undersigned together with all the documentary proof, in original, thereof within 15 days of publication of this notice. Failing which, our client shall complete the sale transaction and all such claims, if any shall be deemed to have been waived and/or abandoned. No third party claims/objections/disputes of any sort will be entertained after the expiry of the above said period.

PROPERTY SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the residential House Property bearing No.66, 1st Main, 2nd Cross, Lakshmi Layout, Abbigere, Bangalore - 560 090, BBMP Ward No.12- Shetty Halli carved out of Sy. No. 30/12 & 30/13 converted for non-Agricultural residential purposes, vide Order No. ALN(N) SR-113/04-05 DTD. 01.10.2004 measuring 1200 Sft alongwith 7 Sqs RCC roofed Residential House and bounded as follows:

East by: Site.No.74, **West by:** 25 ft. wide road, **North by:** Site No. 65, **South by :** Site No. 67.

Together with all rights, title and or interest, hereditaments, privileges, easements, appurtenance etc., attached thereto.

SESHADRI M N, Advocate,
1007, 103, Vijaya Homes, HIG A Sector,
80' Road, Yelahanka New Town,
Bangalore - 560 064. Ph : 98863 05206
Bangalore Dated : 25/01/2021

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to all the concerned that the landed property, mentioned in the Schedule, written hereunder, is absolutely owned and possessed by **Smt. P.B. SUJATHA**. The said owner has agreed to sell the Schedule Property to my client and thus the deal has been concluded by and between the parties.

The above said Owner assured my client that above named Owner is only the owners and the claimants in the Schedule Property and except above said Owner there is/are no other rights/interest holder/s in the Schedule Property. Further assured that she has not entered into any arrangement, agreement of commitment, Memorandum of Understanding, Sale Deed, Agreement of sale, lease, Gift, Mortgage, Joint Venture, Joint Development Agreement, Court Proceedings etc., in respect of the Schedule Property nor created any third party rights in respect of Schedule Property or any part thereof and also assured that the Schedule Property is clean, clear, marketable and unencumbered.

Any person/s and/or company or anybody having any objections, disputes, claims/rights by way of sale, agreement, mortgage, lease, lien, gift, easement, exchange, possession, adverse possession, encroachment, inheritance, succession, memorandum of understanding or otherwise, howsoever in respect of the Schedule Property, the same be informed to the undersigned together with all the documentary proof, in original, thereof within 15 days of publication of this notice. Failing which, our client shall complete the sale transaction and all such claims, if any shall be deemed to have been waived and/or abandoned. No third party claims/objections/disputes of any sort will be entertained after the expiry of the above said period.

PROPERTY SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of the Converted Property bearing Sy. No. 65/1, measuring 3,267 Sqft. Or 0-03 Guntas, situated at Panathur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, within the limits of BBMP, Whitefield Sub-Zone and bounded as follows:

East by : Sy.No.63, **West by :** ROAD, **North by :** Remaining portion of Same Sy.No.65/1, **South by :** Sy. No. 66.

Together with all rights, title and or interest, hereditaments, privileges, easements, appurtenance etc., attached thereto.

SESHADRI MN, Advocate,
1007, 103, Vijaya Homes, HIG A Sector,
80' Road, Yelahanka New Town,
Bangalore - 560 064. Ph : 98863 05206
Bangalore Dated: 25/01/2021

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED

Notice Inviting Tenders (E- Tendering Process)

Sl. No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No./Description of work	Due Date & time for Submission
1	CE/ Projects-II	SE/M/Project-II/01/20-21, Establishment of Wet Flue Gas Desulphurisation system and its Auxiliaries for 2x660MW, Udangudi Supercritical Thermal Power Project - Stage – I Under single EPC basis	03.03.2021 upto 14.00 Hours

For complete details of tender, Please visit our website **www.tangedco.gov.in , www.tenders.tn.gov.in**

DIPR/47Q/Tender/2021 CHIEF ENGINEER/PROJECTS - II

ANDHRA PRADESH CENTRAL POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED
Dr. Y.S.R. Vidyut Soudha,
Corporate office, Besides Govt Polytechnic college, ITI Road, Vijayawada - 520 008

e-Procurement Notice

Tender notification No: CPMPT-10, 12, 13, 14/2020-21 of APCPDCL/CGM (P&MM) dt: 27-01-2021

APCPDCL invites online bids under e-procurement for obtaining **(i) CPMPT-10 /20-21:** 300 Nos-11KV CTs of ratio 400-200-100/1-1A Class 0.2S accuracy, 100 Nos-600-300/1-1-1A Class 0.2S accuracy, 30 No's-11kV Neutral CTs 10/1A 5P10 15VA, 30 No's-11kV Neutral CTs 10/5A 5P10 15VA, 50 Nos-11KV 3PH PT 100VA Class 0.5, 50 Nos-33KV CTs 400-200-100/1-1-1A Class 0.2s, 50 Nos-33KV IPH PTs 100VA 0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPH PTs 10VA 0.2, **(ii) CPMPT-12/20-21:** 15000 No's of 11KV Three Phase IIG Fuse Sets, **(iii) CPMPT-13/20-21:** 15000 No's of LT Three Phase IIG Fuse Sets. **(iv) CPMPT-14/20-21:** 1000000 No's White Polycarbonate Seal bits and 1000000 No's Blue Polycarbonate Seal bits. Tenderers can have further details and download the tender schedules from e-Procurement market place from 27-01-2021 to 15-02-2021 i.e., **https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in** (published by APCPDCL).

Contact no's: EE/P&MM-8331019976, CGM/P&MM: 9440862448.
Email: cgmpmm.cpdcl@apcpdcl.in.

CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR
APCPDCL : VIJAYAWADA

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಧಾರವಾಡ
ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಪಂಗಡ ಘಟಕ
ಪಾವಟೆ ನಗರ, ಧಾರವಾಡ-580003. ದೂ:(0836)-2215271

ನಂ: ಕವಿ.40(ಪಜಾ/ಪಪಂ)/2020-21/ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23-01-2021

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ (ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರಮೆಂಟ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಮಾತ್ರ)

ಟೆಂಡರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: KAU/2020-21/IND-194/CALL-2

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ / ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಪಂಗಡ ವಿಭಾಗದಿಂದ ಸನ್ 2018–19ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ 2019–2020ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ವ್ಯಾಸಂಗ ಪೂರ್ಣಗೊಳಿಸಿರುವ ಸ್ನಾತಕೋತ್ತರ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ **SCP/TSP** ಯೋಜನೆ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ **ಉಚಿತ ಲ್ಯಾಪ್‌ಟಾಪ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು** ಪೂರೈಸುವುದು ಅವಶ್ಯವಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಕಾರಣ ನಿರ್ದಿಷ್ಟ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟದ **590 ಲ್ಯಾಪ್‌ಟಾಪ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು** ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಟೆಂಡರುದಾರರಿಂದ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರಮೆಂಟ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಮುಂದುವರೆದು ಟೆಂಡರ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರಮೆಂಟ **www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in** ಮುಖಾಂತರ **ದಿನಾಂಕ 11–02–2021 ರ 17:00:00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ** ಪಡೆದು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಕಚೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉಪಕುಲಸಚಿವರು ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಜಾತಿ / ಪರಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಪಂಗಡ ವಿಭಾಗ ಇವರಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಟೆಂಡರ ವೇಳಾಪಟ್ಟಿ

1	ಟೆಂಡರ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ	11–02–2021 ಸಮಯ 17:00:00
2	ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ	12–02–2021 ಸಮಯ 17:05:00
3	ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ	15–02–2021 ಸಮಯ 11:00:00

ಸಹಿ/– ಕುಲಸಚಿವರು
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಧಾರವಾಡ

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL No.2, CHENNAI
4th Floor, Dewa Towers, No.770A, Anna Salai, Chennai-600 002
DRC No.130/2020 in O.A.No.364 of 2019

In the matter of
Federal Bank, No.76/10, Hotel Shah International Building, Hosur-635 109. ...Certificate Holder

- Vs -

Seenappa. S., and 4 Others ...Certificate Debtors

To:

1. **Seenappa. S.,** No.233/1, Navaroji Street, 2nd Cross, Denkanikottai, Krishnagiri-635 107.
2. **Suresh,** No.492, EWS, CHS-707, 4th Phase, Yelahanka, New Town, Bangalore-560 064.
3. **S.Hamsa,** No.209/2, Mahadeapura, Mahadevapur, Bangalore, BBMP-560 048.
4. **S.Navitha,** No.233/1, Navaroji Street, 2nd Cross, Denkanikottai, Krishnagiri-635 107.
5. **S.Sunitha,** No.233/1, Navaroji Street, 2nd Cross, Denkanikottai, Krishnagiri-635 107. ...Certificate Debtors

DEMAND NOTICE

(Under rule 2 of Second Schedule to the Income-Tax Act, 1961 and Section 29 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993)

In terms of the Recovery Certificate dated **07.12.2020** (Copy enclosed together with schedule) issued in **Original Application No.364/2019** by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal-2, Chennai an amount of ₹ **19,47,008.90p** (Rupees Nineteen Lakhs Forty Seven Thousand and Eight and paise Ninety only) along with cost, expenses and future interest @ 13.13% p.a. (agreed rate) with monthly rest and penal interest of 2% from the date of application OA i.e., 18.03.2019 till realization, is due against you, jointly and severally.

2. You are hereby called upon to deposit the above sum within **30 days** of the receipt of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made as per rules.

3. You are further put on notice that in terms of Rule 16 of the Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961 read with Section 29 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993, you/your representatives in interest shall not be competent to mortgage, charge, lease or otherwise deal with any property belonging to you, except with the permission of the Recovery Officer.

4. You are also directed to appear before this Forum **on 03.03.2021 (Wednesday) at 11.30 am** and report compliance of payment.

5. This demand notice is now published in this newspaper since the demand notice dated 10.12.2020 sent to you (Certificate Debtors 1 to 5) have been unserved.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal at Chennai this **22nd day of January, 2021.**

(S.SOFIN ROSE)
RECOVERY OFFICER

Dubai gang held, 27K cigarette sticks seized

The items seized at Kempegowda International Airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A three-member gang from Dubai was caught at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on Monday smuggling 26,800 cigarette sticks and perfumes and soap bars totally valued at ₹6.14 lakh in their check-in baggage.

Earlier in the day, two others were caught with 166 grams of gold and 12,000 cigarette sticks. Similarly, three passengers were caught with 29,940 cigarette sticks on January 23.

A senior customs official said the three flyers, natives of Kasaragod, had reached Bengaluru by the same Fly Dubai flight (FZ 3007) at 3.30 pm. "Based on profiling and scanning, we found the items in the baggage they had given for check-in," an official said. It appears as if they were operating together, the official added.

The trio had departed from Calicut to Dubai on January 24 and had returned to Bengaluru the next day by this flight. Each of them had goods valued at a little over ₹2 lakh. The worth of the cigarette sticks alone, all of the popular Benson & Hedges brand, stood at ₹2,94,800. An international flyer is permitted a maximum of 100 cigarette sticks.

The youngest of them, a 25-year-old passenger had goods with maximum value of ₹2.1 lakh. "He had 8,800 sticks ... while the 34-year-old flyer and the 46-year-old flyer carried 9,000 cigarette sticks each in their baggage," the official added.

A total of 312 packets of Faiza Beauty Cream, 141 bars of Silkha Whitening Herbal Soap and 144 packets of Goree Beauty Cream were also seized from the trio. "Carrying a few items of beauty products is allowed but in bulk is not allowed," another official said.

EXPRESS READ

Relief for KIMS officials over irregularities

BENGALURU: The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday took cognisance of a private complaint over alleged breach of trust, cheating and other offences against three people at the Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), on admissions for the MBBS course.

Allowing criminal revision petitions by Dr M G Gopal, Dr MS Appaji Gowda and Dr Nisarga, the court set aside orders passed by the magistrate court, on the grounds that the officer in-charge of the CCB has no authority to file a report.

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Eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and detailed notice inviting tender, please log on to www.nfc.gov.in. e-Tender document for participation is available on www.tenderwizard.com/DAE. Bidders have to register for e-tendering which is compulsory for participating in tendering. For e-Tender details contact Sri Vishal Kumar Cell No. 09849585902. Date for opening Part-2 of tender will be intimated subsequently to the qualified bidders.

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For & On behalf of the President of India

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PUBLIC NOTICE
CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, (OLD NAME) VEERARAGHAVAN JYOTHI NARAYANAN W/o Sampath Lakshmi Narayanan Iyer, Residing at No. 1203, M.N Orchid Infrastructure, Ananthapura Road, Yelahanka, Bangalore - 560 064 have changed my name to **(NEW NAME) JYOTHI NARAYANAN** vide affidavit dated 25.01.2021 sworn before notary R. Vishwanath, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JAYA RANI LAL W/o Vijay Kumar, # A-408, 3rd Floor, Richmond Pride Apartment, Omax Circle, Kyalasanahally, Jigani, Anekal Taluk, State on oath that my original name is **JAYA RANI LAL** and is wrongly entered as **JAYA KUMAR** in passport. Hence this affidavit to submit before competant authority, before Notary C.N Sreekanta Sastry on 23.01.2021 at Anekal.

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Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi has said there is a possibility of another party legislator from Belagavi district getting a berth in the next cabinet expansion after March

PEACE AND PROTEST: TRACTOR RALLY... FROM THEN TO NOW

Indian Express

INDIA PROCLAIMED SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Madras Turns Into 'City Of Lights'

FESTIVE ILLUMINATIONS ON REPUBLIC DAY

RAJENDRA PRASAD SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT

Proclamation Read Out By Retiring Governor-General

A Million People Watch Presidential Procession

The tractor, the quintessential vehicle that moves a farmer's life, has travelled a long distance in the last nearly 70 years. While tractors were used in the first few years of Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi to pull tableaux, as depicted in this photo -- circa 1952 (left), it was a different scene on the streets of Bengaluru on Tuesday (right) where angry farmers stormed into the capital to protest against farm laws. (Top) The front page of Indian Express on January 28, 1950, proclaiming the birth of the republic.

PIC: NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Tractors got a bad name: Minister

Unfortunate, protest turned violent: Suresh Kumar; Hand that holds spade will not hold arms: Sudhakar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

TUESDAY'S protest by farmers in Delhi exposed the involvement of vested interests and proved that their intention was not to agitate against farm laws but to create law and order problems, said BJP leaders in the state on Tuesday.

Reacting to Congress leaders' demand that farm laws passed by the Central government be repealed, Education Minister Suresh Kumar tweeted saying it was unfortunate that tractors got a bad name as the protest by farmers went out of control and led to large-scale violence in Delhi.

Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said, "Farmers are softhearted. The hand that holds the spade and trowel will not hold any arms. Some people are misleading the farming community."

Social Welfare Minister B Sriramulu said that in spite of Union government inviting farmers to hold talks, the protest turned violent. "The Congress is directly responsible it," he alleged.

Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Siddaramiah said that the Modi government should take back all anti-farmer laws before it is too late. "CM Yediyurappa will pay the price for his anti-farmer stand in Karnataka and for his atrocities against farmers who are protesting for their rights," he tweeted.

State Congress unit president D K Shivakumar said that the Republic Day is a Constitution day and on this day, farmers have stood up against unconstitutional laws. "It's because of the government's unconstitutional methods and administration that people from various walks of life, including farmers, have come to the road to protest. The Congress is with them. Farmers are fighting for their rights. But the government is threatening them by seizing their tractors, snatching their keys and threatening them. This is condemnable," he told reporters.

He urged his party workers to join hands with farmers in the protest.

'Cong backing terrorists posing as farmers'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"THERE is no instance in history when farmers have taken the law into their hands and had attacked the police. With the help of the Congress, terrorists, in the guise of farmers, may even attack our soldiers at the nation's borders and other vital locations in the coming days. The Congress is desperate and is hence, supporting the protesters and instigating terrorists who are posing as farmers. The party has been making futile efforts to destabilise the Narendra Modi government as it cannot digest the good governance," he said.

"We would wholeheartedly welcome it if a farmer becomes PM of the country and unfurls the National Flag on Red Fort," he added. The minister also lambasted state Congress leaders D K Shivakumar and H K Patil who, he said, are openly supporting the farmers' protests.

Meanwhile, the Bengaluru City Youth Congress Committee has lodged a police complaint against the minister and has demanded his arrest.

Congress leader S Manohar filed a complaint with the High Grounds police on Tuesday stating that minister Patil had made a statement saying that the protesters in New Delhi were not farmers but terrorists, and they had support from Pakistan. The police, who have received the complaint, have however not registered an FIR so far.

The Congress is desperate and is hence, supporting the protesters and instigating terrorists who are posing as farmers.

B C Patil, Agriculture Minister

FARM PROTEST

Talks with leaders helped, slow traffic only around Freedom Park

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"WE came up with a plan of allowing only a few tractors symbolically and the leaders agreed to it. They were asked to share the registration numbers of tractors and permission was given to around 100 vehicles. The registration numbers were shared with the police of neighbouring districts," the officier added.

Meanwhile, the police in Bengaluru as well as neighbouring districts — Bengaluru Rural, Tumakuru, Kolar, Ramanagara and Chikkaballapur — also held discussions and set up check posts to restrict the movement of tractors into Bengaluru city.

"We were given a list of vehicle numbers to be allowed and only such vehicles were allowed to enter the city. The other tractors which came were sent back while some were seized," a police officer in Bengaluru Rural district said.

We were given a list of vehicle numbers to be allowed and only such vehicles were allowed to enter the city. The other tractors which came were sent back while some were seized

Police officer, Bengaluru Rural district

While about 21 tractors were allowed at Hoskote on Kolar Road, around 20 vehicles were allowed near Madavara on Tumakuru Road. A similar number of vehicles were allowed at Mysuru Road, Magadi Road and Kanakapura Road, sources said.

Besides, the traffic police had come up with a designated route for the protesters, and also the holiday due to Republic Day helped the police manage the situation better. Slow movement of vehicles was reported only around Freedom Park, where the farmers had congregated.

Cong hits out at Shettar over APMC remarks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

EVEN as farmers across the country hit the streets protesting against the farm laws on Tuesday, Industries Minister Jagadish Shettar came under fire from the opposition Congress over his remarks on Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs).

Taking to a social media platform to hit out at Shettar as well as the state and central governments, the Karnataka Congress unit stated that the minister's remarks exposed the BJP plans to shut down AMPCs and leave farmers at the mercy of big companies.

Farmers have to understand that there is a conspiracy to weaken the APMC system and the farm laws will only help big corporates, the Congress stated. Shettar had reportedly said on Monday, "What is wrong if farmers get a good price outside and APMC markets are closed?" However, central and state governments have made it clear that there are no plans to close APMCs.

Responding to the farmers' protest in Delhi on Tuesday, Shettar said, "What happened today is not a protest, it's a premeditated act."

CABINET RESHUFFLE

Ruling party leaders worried over pressure tactics being rewarded

Minor Irrigation Minister J C Madhuswamy at the Republic Day celebrations in Tumakuru on Tuesday | EXPRESS

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

THE musical chairs of portfolio allocation in the Karnataka cabinet that was reshuffled four times in five days has left a bad taste in everyone's mouth. From Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, whose office's clarity of decision making is being questioned by cabinet colleagues and party workers, to ministers whose portfolios were changed multiple times or cadres, nobody seems to be happy even after multiple reshuffles. While the opposition tore into the BJP for the multiple changes in portfolios, workers within the BJP are worried about pressure tactics being rewarded. Some have even expressed their concerns with the Central leadership.

"My portfolio was changed twice but I kept mum. I found it insulting after it was changed a third time and told the Chief Minister that I would like to resign. But I was convinced by elders against it," said JC Madhuswamy, who was allocated the Minor Irrigation portfolio on Monday night. Between January 21 and 25, portfolios of Madhuswamy were changed four times juggling between Minor irrigation and Law plus Parliamentary affairs, Medical Education plus Kannada & culture, Medical Education plus Haj and Wakf, Tourism plus Ecology, environment and finally concluded with the Minor Irrigation department. BJP sources suggested that apart from party leaders, seers of Lingayat mutts too had to intervene to broker peace between an agitated Madhuswamy and Yediyurappa.

Meanwhile, other ministers, like Anand Singh, Narayana Gowda and MTB Nagaraj, have been approaching other senior leaders of the party. "Changing my portfolio without even letting me complete a year makes it look like I did a bad job as a minister," Singh is said to have told a national BJP leader. There is also a grouse among old-timers that the apparent "sacrifices" of newcomers like Dr K Sudhakar, Ramesh Jarkiholi and others who joined the party in 2019 are being weighed heavier than their loyalty to the party and Yediyurappa. Party sources said that their woes over the chief minister succumbing to pressure tactics, either in the form of protest or threat, have also been conveyed to the Central leadership.

Madhuswamy gets stronger with minor irrigation back in kitty

Tumakuru: By managing to get his favourite minor irrigation portfolio back in his kitty after many changes over the last five days, J C Madhuswamy has proved himself to be a strong Lingayat leader within BJP as Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa reportedly budged under pressure from different corners. "An RSS leader too had backed Madhuswamy. The leader convinced him not to put in his papers on Monday," said Sathish, a close associate of Madhuswamy. "My loyalty was taken for granted as my portfolio was changed thrice in nine days. I turned a rebel as I was hurt," Madhuswamy told The New Indian Express after taking part in the 72nd Republic Day celebrations here on Tuesday. "I wanted any portfolio that connected me to the rural life and agriculture. I am okay now as I got minor irrigation," he said.

Anti-CM camp luring unhappy MLAs: BSY men

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

WHEN Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa seemed to be bumbling with the Cabinet reshuffle and changed portfolios four times in five days, there was a quiet celebration in a section of the BJP. This is the group that is opposed to Yediyurappa since he took over as chief minister and its members were happy with the public display of the strongman's 'indecisive' ways, sources in the Yediyurappa camp said.

Now there is a concern among chief minister's followers that this section will stoke anger further among disgruntled legislators, who are unhappy over not getting their due in the reshuffle.

When Yediyurappa assumed office in July 2019, he had an able ally in Ramesh Jarkiholi, who had led a group of 17 'rebels' from the Congress and JDS to switch over to the BJP with the assurance that all of them would be rewarded with ministerial posts. Now that all of them have not been accommodated, there is intense pressure on Yediyurappa, the sources said. All the rebels, except Prathap Gouda Patil, are legislators, and he is facing the election anytime soon.

A Yediyurappa follower said, "The camp opposed to us has been reaching out to the rebels who did not get berths. We are keeping a close watch on these 'unhappy' leaders to ensure that they would not destabilise the government."

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa welcomes Governor Vajubhai Vala during the 72nd Republic Day celebrations in Bengaluru on Tuesday | SHRIRAM BN

BJP to offer Council Chairman's post to JDS for support in Upper House?

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

WILL BJP offer the chairman's post in the Legislative Council to JDS in exchange for the regional party's support in the Upper House? This is the issue that is being hotly discussed within BJP circles, and a crucial meeting between party MLCs and Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday will take a final decision on this.

JDS sources said that the party too has discussed this possibility, but will wait for the Wednesday's meeting between BJP Council members and the CM before committing itself.

The BJP, which has twice sought to 'remove' present Council Chairman from the Congress, Prathap Chandra Shetty, will again try to replace him when the legislature session commences on Thursday. BJP General Secretary and MLC Ravi Kumar said, "We will decide on Council Chairman and Deputy Chairman posts, considering that we have issued notices for no-confidence motion twice."

On the chairman's post being offered to JDS, he said the issue will be discussed with the CM on Wednesday.

The BJP with 31 members is the single-largest party in the Council and also enjoys the support of an independent member. The JDS has 13 MLCs and both parties together with 45 members will have a clear majority in the 75-member House. The Congress has 29 members. There is a single vacancy with the passing away of then Deputy Chairman and JDS member Dharme Gowda.

The fight over the removal of Shetty had led to ugly scenes between ruling and opposition party members, during the last session. BJP Chief Whip Mahantesh Kavatagimath said, "Wednesday's meeting is crucial as the decision on election to the Deputy Chairman's post too will be taken."

If the Chairman's post is offered to JDS, the frontrunner will be Basavraj Horatti. The BJP, which will then put up a candidate for the Deputy Chairman's position, has many frontrunners, including Ayanur Manjunath, Sashil Namoshi and Kavatagimath.

EXPRESS READ

Sringeri sub-registrar files plaint against 'minister's PA'

Shivamogga: Sringeri sub-registrar H S Cheluvaraju has lodged a complaint with the police against a person who had sought money from him claiming to the personal assistant (PA) of Revenue Minister R Ashoka. In the complaint on Sunday, Cheluvaraju alleged that the person, who identified himself as Gangadhar and the "minister's PA", called him for a meeting during the minister's official visit to Sringeri on Sunday. When Cheluvaraju went to meet the minister, Gangadhar called him inside a room and demanded money. When Cheluvaraju said he will not give any money, Gangadhar threatened him. Meanwhile, calls and messages to Ashoka for a comment went unanswered. ENS

For the first time in Telangana, policewomen of the Cyberabad Commissionerate will drive patrol vehicles. These vehicles are dedicated to attend to Dial 100 calls related to women's issues

18 women in 24 yrs: Serial killer sought out victims after losing wife

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hyderabad

MAINA Ramulu, a serial killer who murdered 18 women in the last 24 years, has been arrested by Rachakonda police for his two latest killings — one in Ghatkesar under Rachakonda police limits and the other in Mulugu in Siddipet, after trapping them at toddy compounds.

An analysis of over 500 CCTV cameras from different parts of Hyderabad led to his arrest, Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar said.

After his wife left him for another man, 45-year-old Ramulu bore a grudge against womankind and ever since, has killed 18 women. He was also involved in several theft cases.

Police said Kavala Venkatamma, 50, of Jubilee Hills had gone missing on January 1 and her family lodged a complaint. On January 4, an unidentified woman's body with the face burnt was found at Ankushapur in Ghatkesar. Police found a mobile number in the woman's possession, which led them to her family. While questioning them, police found that Venkatamma used to frequently visit a toddy compound at Yousufguda.

> **Ramulu's victim Kavala Venkatamma (50) had gone missing on January 1 and her family lodged a complaint. On January 4, her body was found. The face was burnt**
>
> Police officer

While analysing the CCTV footage, police saw the woman boarding an auto-rickshaw along with another man. They identified the accused as Maina Ramulu and arrested him.

He had allegedly got Venkatamma drunk, took her to Ankushapur, killed her and burnt her face using her clothes. He also stole her silver anklets. Police detected a similar case at Mulugu in Siddipet district.

So far, Ramulu was involved in 13 murders in Cyberabad, wherein he trapped women at toddy compounds, killed them and robbed their jewellery. He also committed three murders in Hyderabad and two in Medak district. In a 2009 case, registered at the Raidurgam police station of the Cyberabad Commissionerate, he was convicted for life.

Ramulu was also involved in theft cases and escaped from the prison ward at the Institute of Mental Health, Erragadda. He was later arrested but released from prison after moving the High Court. He has now been handed over to the Ghatkesar police for further action.

Andhra SEC censures two top Panchayat Raj officials

Terms them 'unsuited to discharge responsibilities cast on office'

Incentives for gram panchayats for unanimous elections

Vijayawada: Those gram panchayats, where elections will be held unanimously to the sarpanches and ward members, will get financial incentives from the government. Gram panchayats where the population is less than 2,000 will get an incentive of Rs five lakh while the maximum of Rs 20 lakh incentive will be given for gram panchayats with more than 10,000 population. The State panchayat raj and urban development department, to encourage unanimous elections to the gram panchayats, had issued the GO in March 2020. While issuing the GO, the government stated that if elections to gram panchayats are held on party basis there is a possibility that political rivalry, enmity and intense animosity may grow among competing parties, thereby hampering harmony and speedy development. Several states such as Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana and Punjab conduct elections to gram panchayats on a non-political party basis. Some states have even adopted innovative methods to encourage party-less and unanimous elections at the panchayat level.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayawada

STATING that the wilful and deliberate acts of omission and commission and bad faith on part of the panchayat raj department headed by its principal secretary Gopal Krishna Dwivedi and commissioner M Girija Shankar resulted in young and new voters stand disenfranchised and can not cast their vote in the upcoming gram panchayat elections, State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar issued censure orders against the two officials terming them "unsuited to discharge the responsibilities cast on their office". Further, the SEC said the censure will form part of their service record.

Ramesh Kumar issued proceedings to this effect and communicated the same to Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das a day after the Supreme Court cleared the decks for conduct of panchayat elections in the State.

In the eight page proceedings, the SEC deliberated upon the importance of Right to Vote and the conferment of franchise to citizens is an obligation case on the State.

The SEC said that for the conduct of elections, it was decided to adopt the latest (2021) electoral roll and directed the panchayat raj commissioner in November 2020 to instruct all the district panchayat officers to undertake publication of rolls and set a deadline of January 25, 2021. The Chief Electoral Officer has published the finalised roll of 2021 on January 15, 2021.

"The Commission, much to its chagrin, noted that barring DPO, Visakhapatnam, no other DPO in the State had complied with the instructions. This was also brought to the notice of the commissioner, panchayat raj and the administrative department, impressing upon them to undertake the time bound process without fail," Ramesh Kumar said.

Ramesh Kumar said as a result of the intransigence and willful failure, to go ahead with the election schedule, the Commission had no other option but to fall back on 2019 electoral rolls instead of 2021 electoral rolls.

Stating that large number of young voters lost their right to vote as a result of deliberate, willful and colorable exercise of power, the SEC said the two officials exhibited ₹bad conscience and surprising lack of sensitivity to be alive to the responsibility case on them and the horrendous consequences of their acts which they callously shunned and ignored.'

₹₹This is no ordinary lapse to be condoned. For reasons of expediency, there was no option but to adopt 2019 electoral rolls solely on account of failure of the State and panchayat raj department," the SEC said and added that the concerted attempts of the two IAS officials to detail democratic process of holding of elections are not pardonable," the proceedings said.

THROUGH THE RING

The Indian Railway Protection Force dog squad displays its skills during the Republic Day celebrations in Secunderabad on Tuesday | VINAY MADAPU

Duped by travel agent, Mangaluru youth serves jail term in Indonesia

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Mangaluru

A youth from Ullal who was looking for a job in South Korea has alleged that he was cheated by a travel agency and lost ₹6 lakh recently. Mohammed Niyaz, a diploma engineer from Ullal, filed a complaint against the owner of a travel agency for taking huge sums of money making false promises of providing jobs in South Korea.

In a complaint filed with city police commissioner, the victim alleged that **Shamshir Rizwan**, owner of Mangaluru Tours and Travels in Bunder, took ₹6 lakh from him.

Abdul Azeez, Niyaz's father, told *The New Indian Express* that his son, along with three other from the district, were made to stay in a tiny rented room in Indonesia. "Shamshir promised my son a job in South Korea and also a work visa. He took all the required documents and sought ₹6 lakh for the visa. He told my son that he will get the job as a mechanical engineer with a ₹2 lakh salary in a reputed company soon after he pays ₹6 lakh. He took my son to Indonesia on a visitor visa. We trusted him and paid ₹3,50,000 in July 2019 and ₹2,50,000 in February, 2020.

Niyaz said that three other people from Mangaluru shared the room with him from February to September 2020.

"In September, we were arrested by the immigration officials and sent to jail for 14 days on charges of illegal staying. However, we were released after a legal fight. My father has spent almost ₹8 lakh to help me return to Mangaluru," he said, adding that Shamshir hold any legal authority to provide manpower in Indonesia. "Shamshir was sharing a part of the money collected from job seekers with a travel agent in Indonesia. On January 21 this year, he met me in Ullal and promised to return only ₹2 lakh," he said.

Sasi's prison sentence ends today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

INCARCERATED Tamil Nadu leader VK Sasikala will be released from judicial custody on Wednesday. Bengaluru Central Prison authorities confirmed that Sasikala will be released on January 27, after completing her four-year prison sentence in a disproportionate assets case.

Sasikala, who contracted Covid-19, was admitted to Victoria Hospital for treatment. "A prison officer will take her signature in hospital for formal release from judicial custody," an official source said.

Victoria Hospital will conduct a swab test on Sasikala on Wednesday to verify the status of her infection. The test will be repeated on January 30, and she will be discharged from hospital if both tests come negative. According to sources, Sasikala has voiced her concern at contracting the infection in prison.

Her lawyer has asked the government to provide her with 'Z plus' security, stating that she is an influential leader with influential political rivals, who may not be interested in her release. He also raised questions about Sasikala's hospitalisation and pre-hospitalisation events.

Sources said that around 1,000 people, comprising her family members and Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam workers led by her nephew and independent legislator TTV Dhinakaran, reportedly plan to come to Bengaluru to take Sasikala back to Chennai with much fanfare.

OCCULT MURDERS

Accused couple baffle cops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chittoor

THE Madanapalle police registered a case of murder under Section 302 IPC against the couple for brutally murdering their daughters. Father V Purushotham Naidu has been named as A1 and, his wife Padmaja as A2 in the case.

The police faced a tough job while shifting Padmaja, mother of the the deceased daughters, to the local GGH for medical examination. She refused to undergo the mandatory Covid-19 test. However, she co-operated with the police in giving a sample after a few minutes.

"Who are you to tell me (to undergo the test). The virus cannot harm me as it broke out of Lord Shiva's hair and not from Wuhan in China. I'm Lord Shiva's devotee. Coronavirus will end in March. There is no need to use vaccine. Lord Shiva is there in Madanapalle town," d said, while undergoing the mandatory test at the hospital.

The mother remained in a state of trance and did not appear coherent. After being arrested she was seen not walking, but singing and dancing up to the police jeep. Unlike his wife, V Purushotham Naidu co-operated with the police in going through the stipulated Covid-19 test.

'BETTER INFRA OUTSIDE B'LURU MUST TO ATTRACT IT FIRMS'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

BUT some companies feel they would rather wait for the task force report. The five-member task force includes Prof S Sadagopan, former Director of IIIT-Bangalore, B V Naidu, former director, Software Technology Parks of India, Sridhar Mitta, founder of NextWealth Entrepreneurs, Prashanth Prakash, Founding Partner, Accel India, and K S Viswanathan, vice-president of industry initiatives at NASSCOM. The committee has interacted with various stakeholders across the state, studying the local eco-system. "Companies are waiting for the report to see how their recommendations have been considered. We do not know how much of it can be implemented in the short term or in the long term," the official said.

Karnataka still preferred destination

Deputy Chief Minister and IT-BT Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan said 86 new companies registering in two years in Karnataka despite the economic slowdown and Covid is a good sign. "Karnataka was and is a preferred destination for the IT sector. Covid came as blessing in disguise as employers could think of setting up facilities outside Bengaluru after they adopted the Work from Home or Work from Anywhere concept. The gap between virtual and real world is small. Information technology is an integral part of any sector — transport, health, agriculture and even governance," he said.

However, sounding cautious, the director of a two-year-old startup in Bengaluru, who did not wish to be named, said there are many issues, including internet connectivity and power supply, that matter for start-ups to function outside Bengaluru. "At present, we are all working from home and are connected using technology. What we were offered is incentives for buying land, but we need more focus on technology," he stressed.

V Balakrishnan, former Chief Financial Officer, Infosys, pointed out that Bengaluru is a cosmopolitan city and people who come to the city for work also look at the ecosystem — be it the night life, malls and pubs or health care and better education. "Just setting up companies outside Bengaluru will not make employees shift their base. Similar ecosystems have to be provided there too," he argued. While experts stress the need for IT companies to move out of Bengaluru, they have also called for creating better facilities outside. Industry veteran Mohandas Pai said the 'Beyond Bengaluru' concept is not new and earlier too, the government was pushing to take the IT industry to tier-II and tier-III cities. Just by giving tax exemptions or incentives, it will not really happen he felt. Pai pointed out that unless the government provides better education and health care facilities, employees will hesitate to move out of Bengaluru.

"The facilities an employee gets in Bengaluru should also be made available in other cities, otherwise companies will not move out. In many cases, IT companies outside Bengaluru do not get support from the local urban bodies," he noted.

With Bengaluru having reached a threshold, traffic snarls are a common occurrence along many stretches, prompting some companies to shift base to Hyderabad and Pune over the last three years. "I personally want 'Beyond Bengaluru' to materialise, provided all facilities are provided in smaller cities and make employee and employer-friendly," Pai added.

THE COVER

Maha stirs border row pot, to release book on dispute

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @ Belagavi

IN a case that may amount to contempt of court, the Uddhav Thackeray-headed Maharashtra government has decided to release a book on the long-drawn boundary dispute between the two states, titled 'Maharashtra-Karnataka Seemavad: Sangharsh Ani Sankalp' (Maharashtra-Karnataka Boundary Row: Struggle and Resolve) at a programme to be held in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Interestingly, the book is being brought out officially by the Maharashtra government, at a time when a case on the boundary dispute has been filed in the Supreme Court. Even as Chief Minister Thackeray's recent controversial tweet on the merger of "Marathi-majority" areas of Karnataka with Maharashtra drew severe criticism, the government plans to release the book, said to contain the Maharashtra government's arguments over the vexed dispute.

The book release is supported by leaders across political parties in Maharashtra, including Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, Opposition Leader Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. Sharad Pawar will preside over the event, where Thackeray will release the book.

According to sources, the book lists all the events since reorganisation of states in 1956, with regard to the Karnataka-Maharashtra dispute over Belagavi and adjoining areas. The book also highlights the stand taken by the Maharashtra government over the past 64 years.

Although the contents of the book are still unclear, noted Kannada leader Ashok Chandargi drew the Karnataka government's attention towards measures being taken by Maharashtra, with leaders of all parties supporting the government's stand.

> **The contents of the book may impact the court judgment... state boundary issues do not come under the purview of courts**
>
> Legal experts

Several legal experts from Karnataka say the contents of the book may impact the court judgment. While some experts contended that state boundary issues do not come under the purview of courts, and only Parliament can take a call, sources said the Maharashtra government decided to move the apex court after consulting former Chief Justice Y V Chandrachud. Noted advocate Ravindra Totiger suggests that Karnataka can form legal teams to take up the battle.

EXPRESS READ

Pondy MLAs skip Republic Day event

Puducherry: IT was an eventful Republic Day for most of India, marked by festivities, protests, and events. The beach town of Puducherry, however, stayed aloof from all that action, minding its own problems. The situation was such that most elected representatives did not even bother to turn up for the flag hoisting ceremony on Tuesday morning. When Lt Governor Kiran Bedi unfurled the Tricolour at the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, the only elected representatives present at the spot were Chief Minister V Narayanasamy and Speaker VP Sivakozhunthu.

Bike rally held in support of Kisan Parade

Visakhapatnam: A bike rally supporting farmers' agitation to repeal the new agriculture laws was organised in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. Several leaders, student, youth and women's groups participated in the rally. Many demanded the Centre to repeal the new agriculture laws in a meeting held after the rally. Farmers are at risk of becoming labourers if these laws are enforced, said speakers. CPI Vizag secretary M Paidiraju questioned what it was like to draft laws without a vote at a time when the country was in the middle of a pandemic.

EDITORIAL

"The measure of our culture is not that of our ability to learn new tricks, but that of what we have to give"

Ananda K Coomaraswamy

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

TAKEAWAYS FROM UNPRECEDENTED REPUBLIC DAY

This Republic Day was as never before. On that, all sides will cohere. The challenge is with encountering this episode with the Republic's deepest sense of its self-awareness. Depending on where you stand, you could see it as vandalisation besmirching a solemn day, a day when the people of India adopted a Constitution—a national monument really—or as its fulfilment. The violence was not part of the script, any which way you look at it. Angry, riotous mobs broke through Delhi police cordons to reach the iconic ramparts of the Red Fort, where a lone figure hoisted the Nishan Saheb, near the Tricolour. Outside of the momentary significance of the act, we could wonder if it has any place there. If it was an erroneous deployment of the Nishan Saheb itself.

The violence and pitched battles witnessed on the streets of the national capital as protesting farmers poured in across the borders, breaking the barricades with their tractors, put paid to the peaceful nature of the farmers' protests. It's a collective gap that remains for us to fill. The usual R-Day pageantry may be inadequate, but should it be replaced with violence? And who is at fault? Questions assault us as we receive the news of a young man dying. On this day, it is ironical that the state is at loggerheads with a section of its own population. For the farmers, who earned kudos for holding peaceful protests for two months, it may have been a day where they courted a disaster bigger than what they wanted changed. Farmer leaders have not covered themselves in glory. But yes, the state machinery could have chosen to act non-confrontationally. It is perhaps time for governments to recalibrate their roles, and be true to the meaning of representative democracy. Lawmaking here cannot be top down, with the elected government arrogating the rights to itself. There's no shortcut to consensus-building.

ADDRESS INEQUALITY WORSENED BY COVID

The annual Oxfam Report, a contrarian view on growing inequalities released before the World Economic Forum in Davos, is a treatise this year on how the pandemic has served the super-rich. The report claims that India's 100 top billionaires increased their wealth by nearly ₹13 lakh crore during the pandemic, enough to give each of the 138 million poorest Indians a cheque for ₹94,045. At the other end of the spectrum, the freeze in the economy hit the poorest in the informal sector. Of the 122 million who lost their jobs, 75% or 92 million jobs were lost in the informal sector.

The scenario was much the same at the international level. Oxfam claims that the combined wealth of the world's 10 richest men rose by $540 billion during the pandemic, enough to prevent the world from falling into poverty because of the virus slowdown, and also pay for vaccines for all. The report documents how the most vulnerable suffered the most on every front. For instance, in education, the long hiatus in schooling increased the drop-out rate among the children of the poor as they had the least access to digital networks—only 4% of rural households had a computer, and only 15% had access to an internet connection.

As the cost of healthcare and vaccine distribution skyrocket, the charity has been proposing that governments consider a special tax on the super-rich. It's one way of payback as Argentina has done. By imposing what it calls the 'millionaire-tax' on the top 12,000, the country hopes to finance its rickety health system. The UK, which has spent a mammoth $300 billion on Covid-19 support, is considering taxing the top echelons an extra 1% to raise $355 billion over five years. With the Union Budget around the corner, the Indian government could think of similar measures to reduce inequality. However, the pandemic's impact being far-reaching, the government will have to think beyond fiscal measures and take policy decisions to expand its public healthcare and education system, and also invest in a safety net to ensure the poor don't suffer during a crisis.

The new administration could find it difficult to make China fall in line with the Jan 2020 agreement, especially as Beijing has strengthened its position through new alliances

FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY CHALLENGES FOR BIDEN'S U.S.

BISWAJIT DHAR

Professor, Centre for Economic Studies & Planning, School of Social Sciences, JNU

AMIT BANDRE

Within days of occupying the Oval Office, US President Joe Biden issued two significant Executive Orders, the nub of which is to reset the frayed relations of the US with its partners. The first was the decision to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement, from which his predecessor had withdrawn a few months into his presidency. The second was the retraction of the Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the World Health Organization in July 2020. Given that President Biden had played a key role in the Obama administration's efforts to break new ground in US foreign economic relations, do these decisions portend a reset in America's economic relations as well, overcoming the disruptions caused during the Trump era?

Driven by its agenda to "Make America Great Again", the Trump presidency stepped back from its engagements with partner countries. One of its first decisions was to withdraw from the 12-member Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the largest free trade agreement (FTA) that was concluded in 2016. The TPP was central to the Obama administration's policy of "pivot to Asia", which was expected to, among other objectives, deepen relationships with emerging powers and expanding trade and investment. More importantly, it was the strategy to establish American leadership in the most dynamic region of the world.

President Trump's memorandum marking US withdrawal from the TPP was important, for it defined his foreign economic policy. The Memorandum emphasised the importance of bilateral trade negotiations to promote American industry, protect local workers and raise their wages. What followed was a rising tide of US trade protectionism and a series of actions against major trade partners from 2018, beginning with the raising of tariffs on steel and aluminium to target imports from several countries, including India.

Actions against China for perceived violations of intellectual property rights soon followed that snowballed into a trade war, with both sides raising their tariffs. India was also targeted when the Trump administration withdrew the preferential market access that its products enjoyed in the US under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). Importantly, this action was used to negotiate better market access opportunities for the US agribusiness in India in order to satisfy one of Trump's key backers.

Clearly, the key objective of Trump was to ensure that its major trade partners like China and India increase their imports from the US. A deal was struck with the former in January 2020, wherein China agreed to increase its merchandise imports from the US by $162 billion in two years. However, recent numbers suggest that China is nowhere near meeting the commitment. In 2020, China's imports from the US increased by just $12 billion over the previous year's level, while its exports to its largest trade partner increased by $33 billion.

With America's economic ties with several of its major partners seemingly unhinged, the Biden administration is faced with two sets of challenges. First, how does it deal with China, which has emerged from the pandemic-induced crisis much stronger than before? Second, does the "pivot to Asia" strategy have a future?

While Biden has not been averse to joining the Pacific trade pact, his VP and some prominent Democrats have argued against the deal. So it is unclear as to how the economic dimensions of 'pivot to Asia' can be implemented

President Biden has frequently stated that he would not remove the 25% tariffs that his predecessor had imposed on about half of China's exports to the US. This is hardly surprising in view of the bipartisan support for the tough stand against China and also because Trump's anti-China rhetoric evoked a sense of economic nationalism in the country. The new administration could also find it difficult to make China fall in line with the January 2020 agreement, especially because Beijing seems to have strengthened its position through new alliances: by the forging Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) with the European Union and by joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

President Biden seems to have given the "pivot to Asia" strategy a new lease of life by appointing Kurt Campbell, the architect of this strategy in the Obama administration, as the Indo-Pacific coordinator. But can the US play the leadership role in the region without having a forum to move the strategy forward? Since the US withdrew from the TPP, the 11 remaining countries formed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). While President Biden has not been averse to joining CPTPP, his Vice President, Kamala Harris, and some prominent members of the Democratic Party, including Bernie Sanders, have argued that the agreement "did not meet their standards". It is, therefore, unclear as to how the economic dimensions of "pivot to Asia" can be implemented under the new administration.

What could be the future of US-India trade relations? Economic relations between the two countries have largely been frosty, despite the bonhomie between their leaders. The Trump administration's sole objective was to ensure that India increases its imports, thus narrowing the nation's existing trade deficit. On the other hand, India has sought restoration of GSP benefits. Over the past year, India has been exploring the possibility of an FTA with the US, but this move was not adequately reciprocated. The question is, will the Biden administration engage? And what will be its terms of engagement?

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WHITE ONE & A MATRIX OF CLOUD, THE DHAULI SCULPTURE

SRINIVAS SISTLA

Associate Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

At Dhauli, about eight kilometres from Bhubaneswar, there is a sculpture of an elephant on the summit of a small hillock, which also contains edicts of Asoka (r. 268-232 BCE), the Maurya king of the Magadha empire with its capital at present day Patna. The Dhauli hillock and the nearby village are located on the banks of River Daya where the Kalinga battle of Asoka had taken place in 261 BCE. The edicts and the elephant sculpture must have been commissioned by Asoka soon after. The Dhauli elephant is a well-known work, and nearly all prominent historians, archaeologists and art historians have written about it. Yet, the sculpture has not been viewed in its entirety ever since it was rediscovered in the early 19th century, as a result of which its real beauty and unparalleled sense of imagination still remain unrevealed.

In 1837, Markham Kittoe discovered the Dhauli edicts of Asoka, and reported the same along with a brief note in which he had described the sculpture as "the forehalf of an elephant", and ever since then, the work has been seen in the same way. For instance, in 'An Album of Indian Sculpture', C Sivaramamurti had said, "The Dhauli elephant, carved in the living rock as almost to appear emerging alive, is an excellent example of loving study of animals so vividly presented with the utmost natural treatment." More recently, Joanna Williams had written an essay on elephants in Indian art, and said, "The significance of the Dhauli elephant has never been explained to my satisfaction", and described the work as "the animal that emerges from a matrix of rock".

Of course, the Dhauli elephant sculpture is a work in stone/rock; but in my opinion, once the carving had been finished by the Dhauli artist(s), in about 261 BCE, under the patronage of Asoka, the work contains no more rock or stone, but a large round sculpture with two major components viz., the elephant in front, and behind the same a matrix of cloud, which had not been identified so far by anyone else. In all earlier studies, no scholar took the hind part of the work into consideration as they had viewed that portion as mere rock, not as a large mass of cloud. Incidentally, the Asoka edict at the place ends with the word *Sevto* in Pali, and the same in Sanskrit means *Sweto* and the White One in English. This suggests that the sculpture is not at all meant to depict any ordinary animal, but the all-white Bull Elephant—which figures in ancient Indian religions and culture by name Airavata and resides in *Swarga*. Thus, the sculpture represents the end of the *Gajayana* or the Bull Elephant's Journey, which began in heaven and concluded on the summit of the Dhauli hillock. Apparently, at the beginning of the journey, the cloud enveloped the White One completely at the gates of heaven, and brought the same up to the summit of the hillock. After perching on the summit, the cloud began receding backwards so as to leave the White One there. In the process, the cloud only revealed the front portion of the White One; the remaining part is still within it.

Airavata figures, for the first time in Indian literature, in the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, in which the first poet of Sanskrit literature addresses Rama as "O bull among men," and says further that "Matangi gave birth to elephants. The mighty elephant Airavata, who became the lord of the world, was born to Iravati." Interestingly, here Valmiki has described Airavata as "the lord of the world". Such a statement clearly suggests that the all-white Bull Elephant had been considered an independent and most supreme divinity. Further, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Krishna says to Arjuna, "Among horses know me to be *Ucchaihsrava* (the best horse) ... I am Airavata among all lordly elephants." In the *Mahabharata*, Vyasa describes Airavata as a resident of heaven along with other divinities. But later on, the Puranas portrayed Airavata as the *vahana* of Indra, who figures as a prominent divinity in the Vedic literature, but without any association with any elephant, leave alone Airavata.

Front and side views of the elephant-cloud sculpture in Dhauli, Odisha

The Dhauli sculpture represents the concept of the all-white Bull Elephant as the most divine fertility symbol. This might even suggest a very ancient custom of animal worship, the adoration of the all-white Bull Elephant in particular, which most likely had been practiced by the forest dwellers of the Kalinga region, and perhaps even elsewhere in India. Furthermore, the Dhauli hillock itself seems to have been worshipped as the divine and the all-white Bull Elephant even before Asoka had come to the region; for, the actual name of the hillock is Aswathama, which in turn reminds me of the name of a prominent war-elephant from Kalinga that had participated in the Kurukshetra battle of the *Mahabharata*. The elephant fought on the side of the Kauravas of Hastinapur (city of elephants).

Surprisingly, though the all-white Airavata figures prominently in Indian mythologies, like the *Vishnu Purana* and so on, to the best of my knowledge, the worship of the same has not been mentioned anywhere in classical Sanskrit literature. But a few Marathi folk songs, which have been translated by Iravati Karve, and a few more legends in Kannada mention that Gandhari, the queen of Hastinapur, had worshipped the figure of Airavata that was made by her sons with clay and cow dung.

To the best of my awareness, no modern scholar has considered the possibility of any existence of the worship of the all-white Bull Elephant either in the context of studies in ancient Indian culture, or in the ongoing studies of the Asoka edicts. Yet, clear traces of the existence of such worship of the White One can be found in early Tamil texts. For instance, the *Silappattikaram* mentions, though in brief, a temple of Airavata at Puhar, though no temple or deity has survived at the place. It seems most likely that the all-white Bull Elephant of the time may have been made with quickly perishable materials such as fresh clay or cow dung. Such a divine figure might have even been placed on an open-air platform, which could still be called a *gudi* or *alayam* (place of worship). Incidentally, the White One of Asoka on the summit of the Dhauli hillock is an open-air sculpture. In his edicts, Asoka had insisted, time and again, that his message needs to stay and be communicated perpetually. With the same intention, he seems to have commissioned the White One in stone, for the first time in the history of India. In spite of all this analysis, the cloud part of the sculpture still bewilders me: From where did such a unique idea occur to Asoka? It is interesting to note that in the Dhauli edict, Asoka himself had said, *"Now you do not understand how far this matter goes / Some individual person understands this / But he, too, only a part / Not the whole."*

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MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Destabilising the nation

The violence due to the tractor rally by farmers and the breach of the Red Fort was shocking on the historic Republic Day. It clearly seems to be a planned attempt to destabilise the nation by vested interests.

CM Umanath, Kozhikode

Violence is not the answer

Republic Day celebrations are about showcasing equality, secularism and brotherhood, not violent tractor rallies. Farmers have a right to express their opinions, but it cannot be done like this.

Sneha S Kamath, Bengaluru

HC verdict shocking

It is shocking to read about the Bombay High Court's verdict that groping a minor's breast without 'skin to skin' contact was not sexual assault. The NCPCR has done right by asking for a review.

C Ghanshyam, Visakhapatnam

Effective against Covid 2.0

It is good news that the Moderna vaccine seems to work against the UK Covid strain. Such vaccines will hopefully save us from the wrath of the second wave of Covid.

Jones Vimal, email

Award for the nightingale

The Padma Bhushan awarded to esteemed singer K S Chitra is well deserved. The nightingale is always captivating.

Duhitha Srinivas, Bengaluru

Posthumous honours

As usual, a few Padma awards this year have gone to those who are no longer with us. While one can appreciate the logic behind posthumous awards for gallantry, for other categories they mean very little. Someone like SPB deserved more during his lifetime.

C V Aravind, Bengaluru

Maintain Indo-US relations

This is with reference to *Moving into Biden era: Managing India's strategic security* (Jan 26). India must continue to nurture relations with the US. However, India's wisdom of multilateralism has also paid rich dividends in the past.

A M Chakravarty, Hyderabad

Need permanent solution

The corps commander level talks between the Indian and Chinese armies has yielded no results. Political leaders must try to find a permanent solution for the border issue.

Bijumon P N, Idukki

Probe into loan apps

This with reference to *Tackling the threat posed by loan apps* (Jan 26). The number of online lenders available shows that a deeper probe into the issue is necessary.

K Jayanthi, Chennai

Juggling portfolios

Karnataka CM Yediyurappa's recent juggling of portfolios was once again in the fore with a new list released on Monday. This has happened four times in the past six days. His allocations have also not gone down well with many.

N J Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Prahlad Patel @prahladspatel
The Red Fort is a symbol of the dignity of our democracy. The farmers should have stayed away from it. I condemn the violation of this dignity.

Rahul Gandhi @RahulGandhi
Violence is not the solution to any problem. If anyone gets hurt, the damage will happen to our country. Take back agri laws for the benefit of country!

Yogendra Yadav @_YogendraYadav
We've always said peace has been our strength. Today, that peace has been breached. But what happened is absolutely shameful & condemnable

(1) A farmer smashes the windshield of a bus deployed on police duty at ITO New Delhi on Tuesday after the tractor rally turned violent; (2) a Nihang confronts a policeman at Mukarba Chowk; (3) cops resort to lathicharge to disperse protesters at Red Fort | PARVEEN NEGI/SHEKHAR YADAV

Morcha blames others for parading trouble

Farmer leaders distance themselves from those who caused violence in national capital during tractor rally, say future steps to be decided after assessing situation

LEADERS' VOICES

We are a democracy. On Republic Day, we got our Constitution. The Constitution makers talked about various rights with which we can make our lives happier. Our rights do not mean that we can do anything, there are some limits

Manohar Lal Khattar, Haryana CM

PM Modi should have taken the initiative to open the dialogue with the protesting farmers. If the central government thinks that it can quell any sort of protest and agitations by using the force, then it is having a wrong understanding of the ground reality

Sharad Pawar, NCP president

I have supported the farmers' protests from the start but I cannot condone lawlessness. And on #RepublicDay no flag but the sacred tiranga should fly aloft the Red Fort

Shashi Tharoor, Congress leader

Tear gassing & lathicharging kisans is unacceptable. Why, after the Delhi Police & Samyukt Kisan Morcha agreement? Why is the government provoking a confrontation

Sitaram Yechury, CPI(M) general secretary

Deeply disturbed by worrying & painful developments that have unfolded on the streets of Delhi. Centre's insensitive attitude and indifference towards our farmer brothers & sisters has to be blamed for this situation

Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal CM

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

AS chaotic scenes unfolded in Delhi amid criticism of violence by a section of the farmers, leaders of the protestors alleged that anti-social elements infiltrated their peaceful agitation. Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), umbrella body of 40 farmer unions, blamed the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC) for breaking rules and marching down unscheduled routes.

KMSC is not part of the platform of the 32 Punjab farmers unions, but it has been participating in farmers' meetings.

"They (KMSC) did not listen to SKM leaders, who pleaded with them not to force their way into Delhi. Also, Delhi Police and other elements misguided the farmers," said a senior farmer leader.

KMSC was formed in 2007 after Satnam Singh Pannu, its present head, fell out with Kanwalpreet Singh, the then head of the parent group Kisan Sangharsh Committee. KMSC has presence in around seven districts in Punjab. Pannu had in the past been an activist of CPI (M). He said they marched on Ring Road and came back to Singhu, adding that they did not go to Red Fort.

Holding certain groups with vested interests responsible for the trouble, the Morcha maintained that things were peaceful from their end. "We thank farmers for the unprecedented participation in today's parade. We also condemn and regret the undesirable and unacceptable events that have taken place today and dissociate ourselves from those indulging in such acts. Despite our efforts, some organisations and individuals have violated the route and indulged in condemnable acts," said a statement.

Leaders of SKM added that they will try to get a clearer picture of what happened and release a statement after that. However, they insisted that by and large, events of the day were peaceful.

Hannan Mollah, general secretary of All India Kisan Sabha, blamed outsiders. "There were a few anti-social elements who caused violence and clashed with police in some areas, to defame our peaceful protest," he said.

BKU, Punjab (Rajewal Group), chief Balbir Singh Rajewal distanced himself from those who caused trouble. He said the 32 unions from Punjab were following the routes and rules.

Amit Shah orders police to go hard on violators

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah issued directions to the Delhi Police to take strict action against those who indulged in violence on Tuesday during the farmers' tractor rally.

In a two-hour meeting with senior officials from the home ministry, Intelligence Bureau and Delhi Police, Shah reviewed in detail the security situation in the national capital after violence broke out at farmers' rally in several areas

At the meeting in his residence, Shah also ordered additional paramilitary forces were deployed in Delhi. Around 15 additional companies of paramilitary forces will be deployed at the sites of violence such as ITO, Nangloi and Ghazipur, sources said. The 15 companies of Central Armed Police Forces include five companies of CRPF already deployed on Monday.

Shah also asserted that law and order is restored as soon as possible, sources said, adding that he sought a detailed account of how things went out of control on Tuesday.

Wielding sticks, clubs and holding the Tricolour and union flags, tens of thousands of farmers atop tractors broke barriers, clashed with police and entered the city from various points marching towards the Red Fort and hoisting the Nishan Sahib flag there on Republic Day. Prior to this spate of violence, hundreds of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and UP, have been camping peacefully at several Delhi border points, including Tikri, Singhu and Ghazipur, since November 28. They are seeking a complete repeal of the three central agriculture laws and a legal guarantee on minimum support price for their crops.

Officials said the home minister is keeping a close eye on the developments and is monitoring the situation. Among those who attended the meeting were Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava and the Intelligence Bureau director.

Farmers and their supporters remove barricades during the tractor rally near Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar in New Delhi on Tuesday | SHEKHAR YADAV

PUNJAB, HARYANA ON HIGH ALERT

Haryana and Punjab have sounded a high alert in the states and said anyone taking law into one's hands will be dealt with strictly. Haryana DGP Manoj Yadava asked district police chiefs to be vigilant. Punjab CM Amarinder Singh asked DGP Dinkar Gupta to ensure that law and order is not deteriorated at any cost.

KIDS STRANDED FOR 2 HRS AT FORT

Around 200 artistes, including children, who were part of the R-Day parade, were rescued after they got stranded near Red Fort on Tuesday. They were rescued by police personnel after being stuck for almost two hours in the afternoon, provided refreshments and subsequently escorted away.

Protesters and police personnel clash at the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi on Tuesday | PARVEEN NEGI

Tricolour sanctity not violated in fortress breach

NIKITA SHARMA/SANA SHAKIL @New Delhi

THE very spot in Red Fort where Prime Ministers have addressed India on Independence Day from, became a centre of attention on Republic Day. Agitating farmers barged into Red Fort and hoisted the Nishan Sahib flag, which is a symbol of the Sikh religion. It was seen fluttering a few metres away from the Tricolour.

Visuals of the incident and the Flag Code of India, 2002 — which governs the display of the national flag — made it clear that the Tricolour was not disrespected. The mast where protesters hoisted the Nishan Sahib flag was empty. According to the Flag Code, no other flag should be placed higher than or above or alongside the national flag. Visuals showed that the Tricolour continued to remain hoisted on top of the Red Fort.

The incident came in for criticism from several quarters, with some describing it as an "assault" on the national flag. "Red Fort is a symbol of the dignity of our democracy. The farmers should have stayed away from it. I condemn the violation of this dignity. It is sad and unfortunate," said Union minister Prahlad Patel.

Farmers broke barricades and entered Red Fort despite the presence of police personnel, who were significantly outnumbered. Some of the tractors were parked on the ground in the front of the fort and people could be heard raising slogans from the top of the fort.

Officials said it was a security breach, as agitating farmers had crossed around half a dozen barricades to reach the flagpole at the Lahore Gate ramparts, which was being manned by Delhi Police, CISF and a private security agency.

Paramjeet Singh Katyal, of Jai Kisan Andolan led by Yogendra Yadav, said: "The Sanyukta Kisan Morcha was not involved in this. It was done by miscreants and associations like Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti and some government agencies."

He alleged it was done in a planned manner to brand them Khalistanis. "To an extent, it happened the way the government wanted it to happen. We are criticising whatever has happened. I have never seen people enter the Red Fort."

Sidhu, blamed for Red Fort violence, was campaign manager of BJP MP

NEW DELHI: Punjabi actor-singer **Deep Sidhu** was blamed by farmer unions for inciting the youths to march to Red Fort and hoist the 'Nishan Sahib', the Sikh religious flag, there.

"Deep Sidhu instigated the youth to take over the agitation and give it a different colour. He damaged our agitation and we don't know who they are working for," Joginder Singh Ugrahan of BKU (Ugrahan) said. In videos doing the rounds on social media on Tuesday, Sidhu was seen holding the Khalsa flag and shouting slogans in support of 'Kisan Mazdoor Ekta' and Khalsa at Red Fort.

As the Red Fort violence came in for widespread condemnation, farmer unions were quick to disassociate themselves with Sidhu. It was also alleged that he supported the Khalistani movement. The 36-year-old artist frequently quotes Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Later, a photo of Sidhu along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP's Gurdaspur MP and actor Sunny Deol started circulating on social media platforms. He is said to have campaigned for Deol in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Sidhu was part of the actor's campaign team, but Deol had distanced himself from Sidhu in December after he joined the farmers' agitation.

In a video posted on Facebook, Sidhu justified the move and said, "We have only hoisted the Nishan Sahib flag on the Red Fort while exercising our democratic right to protest. In this kind of protest, people's anger flares up and you cannot blame one person for inciting the protesters."

He clarified that the national flag was not removed from the flag pole at Red Fort.

Deceased farmer was in Australia, returned 2 yrs ago

NAMITA BAJPAI @Lucknow

THE farmer who died after his speeding tractor overturned near the ITO junction in central Delhi during a tractor rally on Tuesday has been identified as Navreet Singh, a resident of Dibdiba village in Rampur district of western Uttar Pradesh.

Singh had gone to Delhi with a tractor to participate in the proposed tractor parade by the farmers against the Centre's new farm laws.

Sources said Singh, 45, had returned to India from Australia two years ago. The family is involved in farming.

Despite repeated attempts to contact, his family remained incommunicado.

"His body is being brought to Rampur by the district police team. The autopsy of the body will be done in Rampur," said Rampur Additional Superintendent of Police Sansaar Singh.

He added that police force was deployed in Dibdiba village in adequate numbers so that no anti-social elements could disrupt the peace in the area. He claimed that the police authorities were also in touch with the family.

Of tractors and detractors: BJP top brass silent on rally that turned unruly

MANISH ANAND @New Delhi

THE government and the BJP were guarded on the turn of events during the tractor rally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda refrained from making public comments till late on Tuesday.

It was learnt that Shah was being briefed about the situation by senior officials.

There were only a few voices from the BJP against the Red Fort incident, where a protestor raised a Nishad Sahib flag amid skirmishes with police personnel. The silence of senior leaders and top ministers was a departure from the past, when they aired their views on various issues on social media. Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, Prahlad Patel was among the few to speak out. "Red Fort is the symbol of our democracy. The protestors should have stayed away from Red Fort. I condemn the violation of the sanctity of Red Fort. This is sad and unfortunate," he tweeted. Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal were among other prominent names silent. Former BJP vice-president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe blamed the Congress, saying that they irresponsibly supported the farmers. "Populism is a phenomenon exploited to the hilt by the Congress and its allies at the cost of the nation," tweeted Sahasrabuddhe. BJP's former general-secretary P Muralidhar Rao also took to Twitter to criticise the Red Fort incident. "In Indian democracy you can have a mobilisation challenging the government on policies... but you can't have a situation where it's challenging the sovereignty of the country."

RSS general-secretary Suresh Joshi condemned the incidents, saying it's an insult to martyrs who sacrificed their lives for independence and sovereignty of the country.

MILLIONAIRE MLAs

Over 56 per cent of MLAs in Assam, including CM Sarbananda Sonowal and NEDA convenor Himanta Biswa Sarma, have assets worth over ₹1 crore, as per a report from Association for Democratic Reforms and Assam Election Watch

229 STAFF HELD FOR GRAFT SINCE 2016 IN ASSAM

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	26	12	Mumbai	28	19
Bhopal	22	8	Panaji	33	22
Jaipur	20	6	Patna	17	7
Amritsar	19	4	Lucknow	18	8
Chennai	30	22	Port Blair	28	25
Kolkata	24	14	Imphal	21	5
Srinagar	6	-6	Chandigarh	20	7

(Left) Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, the first woman fighter pilot to take part in an R-Day event, on the IAF tableau; Ladakh tableau making its debut | PTI

Limited spectators, compulsory masks mark R-Day of many firsts

From Bangladesh army contigent to Ladakh's tableau, Rajpath witnessed many debuts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

LIMITED spectators, shortened hours of performance wearing masks, parade ending at the national stadium instead of marching to Red Fort, yet India's 72nd Republic Day celebration will be remembered for many of the firsts it showcased.

Blessed with a sunny day, the parade on Tuesday saw around 25,000 visitors. This year's Parade Commander was Lieutenant General Vijay Kumar Mishra followed by Second-in-Command Major General Alok Kacker. A total of 32 tableaus — 17 from states and UTs, six from the Defence Ministry and nine others — were on display.

The Republic Day parade began with a 122-member contingent of the Bangladeshi armed forces marching for the first time on Rajpath.

Like every year, this year too it was a power-pack show by the nation's armed forces who took over the Rajpath with the BrahMos missile, third-generation Russian T-90 battle tank, the T-72 bridge-layer tank, the BMP-2 armoured personnel carrier, the Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher and others.

It was also a remarkable moment when Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth — the first Indian woman to qualify for a combat mission in a fighter jet — became the first to participate in the flypast, creating a history. A total of 38 Air Force and four Army aircraft took part in the flypast. Amongst the tableau, it was for the first time that the Union Territory of Ladakh got to be displayed in the parade. The tableau highlighted the 'Vision' for Ladakh to be carbon neutral and exemplary for the world.

Uttar Pradesh's tableau displayed the state's cultural city of Ayodhya and the Ram temple, which is under construction, was another major attraction this year. The touch of pandemic was seen in the parade with the theme of Aatma-Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: COVID — the tableau by the Department of Biotechnology depicting the process of COVID19 Vaccine development through various processes.

> This was the first time that I could watch the performance live. I thoroughly enjoyed, especially loved how it ended with Rafale
>
> A UPSC aspirant from Kerala

Maha Congress questions criteria for Padma awards

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI
@Mumbai

THE Maharashtra government had recommended 99 names for the Padma awards to the Centre, but only one, social activist Sindhutai Sapkal, was selected for Padma Shri.

This year, six people from Maharashtra have been conferred with the Padma awards. Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant on Tuesday accused the Centre of giving step-motherly treatment to the state over these awards.

Sawant alleged that the Padma awards have been given to those who are close to the RSS or its affiliated organisations. "The real work was not the criteria. What mattered was one's closeness with the RSS, which is unfortunate," alleged Sawant.

Sawant said most recipients of such awards came from BJP-ruled states.

The Central Government, which denied Padma Bhushan to Sindhutai Sapkal, has selected Rajinikanth Shroff, owner of United Phosphorus Company, for the Padma Bhushan award. The company is headed by Union Minister Piyush Goyal's brother Pradip Goyal, he said.

Dhannipur mosque work starts after Tricolour hoisting

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Lucknow

AFTER unfurling the Tricolour at a five-acre stretch at Dhannipur village in Ayodhya district, the construction of a mosque and other facilities started on Tuesday.

The occasion was marked also by the planting of nine saplings by Zufur Farooqui, chairman of Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) and its members. IICF is a body constituted by the Sunni Central Waqf Board to take care of the mosque project at Dhannipur village under Sohawal Tehsil in Ayodhya district.

IICF chief Zufar Farooqui planted the sapling of tamarind to start the project in a simple ceremony. Prominent among those present on the occasion included the members of Rashtriya Muslim Manch, a wing of Rashtriya Sewak Sangh (RSS).

The project comprises a super-specialty hospital, a library, an Indo-Islamic Cultural Complex, a museum and a community kitchen. The land was allocated by the UP government to UP Sunni Central Waqf Board in compliance of the Supreme Court order delivered on November 9, 2019.

Air India seeks to raise ₹225-cr loan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

AIR India Ltd plans to raise up to ₹225 crore through a short-term loan from domestic lenders by January 31 to refinance an earlier debt. The loan will carry a sovereign guarantee and lenders will have to submit their bids by 27 January.

As per the tender document, the loan will also be used for refinancing working capital. This short term loan (STL) will be for a period of one year and is guaranteed by 18 aircraft, sundry debt and inventory. The airline intends to use the funds for refinancing its current loan. The development has come when the disinvestment process of the national carrier is under progress. The government is in the process of selling 100 per cent stake in the national carrier. According to the government, multiple preliminary bids have been received in this regard, including that of Tata group and by a group of Air India employees.

Officials said that the loan is required as the government has stopped infusing funds into the airline.

UN hopes talks would resolve India, China row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

UNITED Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres hoped that the tensions between India and China will be resolved through dialogue.

The UN Secretary General's statement comes days after a clash between Indian and Chinese troops along the border in Sikkim.

"Only to say that we hope that, through dialogue, the tensions that may exist along the border could be dialled down," spokesperson of the UN Secretary General Stephane Dujarric said.

Indian and Chinese troops were involved in a clash in the high-altitude Naku La region in North Sikkim on January 20, an incident described by the Indian Army as a "minor face-off".

In a statement, the Indian Army said the face-off was resolved by local commanders as per established protocols.

Guterres' comments come a day after military commanders of India and China met for the ninth time for over 15 hours to find a solution to an almost nine-month long stand off between the two countries.

"The two sides agreed that this round of meeting was positive, practical and constructive, which further enhanced mutual trust and understanding. The two sides agreed to push for an early disengagement of frontline troops. They also agreed to follow the important consensus of their state leaders, maintain the good momentum of dialogue and negotiation," a statement from the government after the talks stated.

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during the 72nd Republic Day parade at Red Road in Kolkata on Tuesday | PTI

MLA resigns from TMC posts, served notice

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Kolkata

TRINAMOOL Congress MLA Prabir Ghoshal, who had resigned from two posts alleging that he was not being allowed to work, was handed a show-cause notice on Tuesday.

The Uttarpara MLA had resigned as a member of the Hooghly district committee and also quit as TMC spokesperson. "I have been forced to take this decision as there is an active lobby that is not allowing me to do my work in my constituency. I will still continue to be MLA keeping in mind the needs of people," Ghoshal said.

Ghosal was asked to explain why he had shared internal affairs of the TMC with the press, a party insider said.

Due to infighting, the TMC legislator had claimed, he was not informed about Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's public rally at Hooghly on Monday. Ghosal, however, had announced earlier that he had no immediate plans to desert the ruling party

He alleged that a conspiracy is being hatched to defeat him in the upcoming assembly polls "if I contest again from the Uttarpara seat".

Ghoshal claimed the Trinamool ended poorly in the Lok Sabha polls from the seat due to "infighting" within the party. "An important road connecting Kanaipur with Nabagram is in poor shape since long, and all my representations to the higher authorities have failed. It seems a vested interest is at work to not allow good people to stay in the party," the disgruntled TMC leader said.

The Trinamool Congress has been facing a string of exits from its ranks which includes the likes of Suvendu Adhikari, Arindam Bhattacharya, Sunil Mondal, Banasri Maity, Silbhdrada Dutta. Like Ghosal, another TMC leader and former forest minister Rajib Banerjee had resigned from party posts on January 22 alleging that he was not allowed to work by his party colleagues. A miffed Mamata on Monday had announced that those who are unhappy can exit the party but added that the doors of her party will be closed for turncoats. Rajib Banerjee, meanwhile, vowed to contest from Domjur.

Man forced to disown son for marrying woman of his choice in Chhattisgarh

EJAZ KAISER @Raipur

LITTLE did a tribal youth from Jashpur district know that marrying a woman of his choice would result in his father being forced to publicly disown him to appease the community elders hell-bent on ensuring 'discipline'. Pravin Banjara's transgression of marrying a woman out of his caste not only led to his family's social boycott, but also entailed a fine of ₹5,000 to return to the community's fold.

Soon after Pravin got married in September last, community issued a diktat to boycott his family to 'maintain discipline on those transgressing rituals, traditions'.

Pravin's father Ashok says the boycott caused untold miseries. "We were not allowed to attend any function, interact with anyone. We were barred from buying daily essentials locally. Left no option, we had to disown our son and pay ₹5,000 fine to gain acceptance," Ashok says.

The matter came to light after a distressed Pravin, a resident of Pandripani, lodged a complaint with Jashpur collector Mahadev Kavre. "I have asked the Pandrapani sub-divisional magistrate to probe into the incident and submit a report," Kavre said.

Assailing the arbitrary social exclusion, Raipur-based ophthalmologist and recipient of the Centre's national award for promoting scientific temper Dr Dinesh Mishra said: "Such exclusion causes deep and invisible pain. Sadly, there is no effective law to combat this ever-increasing menace."

AT 9,102, DALY COVID-19 TALLY AT ALL TIME LOW

As per the numbers shared by the Centre, the daily new Covid-19 touched a new low in the last 24 hours as just 9,102 daily new cases were added to the national tally in a day after 237 days. Also, the country recorded fewer than 120-117 — fatalities in the last 24 hours after more than eight months. Country's active Covid-19 caseload now stands at 1,77,266 majority of whom are in home isolation

Third national serosurvey done, results expected by next week

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

AS the daily new Covid-19 cases in India fell below 10,000 mark and the fifth serosurvey in Delhi indicated a widespread infection that may be leading to herd immunity, the third national sero-surveillance too has been completed and the results are expected by next week.

The findings of the survey are expected to guide the Centre's immunisation plan beyond the prioritised groups. Sources in the ICMR told *TNIE* that the last samples to detect the antibodies in the population had been collected now and results are being gathered.

"The sample collection for this study started a month ago and is complete now," said an ICMR official. "We are hoping that data analysis will begin in a day or two after which we will know the actual status of Covid-19 spread in the country."

Officials said that the third disease surveillance exercise too, will be based on testing for antibodies in samples collected from nearly 30,000 individuals. "A significant difference is that we will also test for antibodies against spike protein-which stay longer-and not just IgG antibodies which disappear from the blood in a few months," another official explained.

Libraries open to patrons following safety norms

State-owned, government-aided and government-sponsored libraries across West Bengal resumed service on Monday last. Although a limited number of readers are being permitted, services are being offered thrice a week on alternate days. Sources said the directorate of library services asked the employees to take 'strict protective measures, including sanitising the library premises daily and allowing half of already enrolled readers according to protocols prescribed by the health department'.

PRANAB MONDAL
Our correspondent in West Bengal
pranabm@newindianexpress.com

KOLKATA DIARY

Belur Math opens doors to devotees, visitors

After remaining closed for over six months, the Belur Math will be open for devotees and visitors from February 10. Around 300 monks stay and close to 250 employees work at the Math, which is the global headquarter of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. The Math was closed after the prime minister-announced lockdown in March. It was briefly opened when the lockdown norms were relaxed in August. However, the doors were shut on the visitors shortly after. Sources said the senior monks of the order met recently to review the situation. After deliberations, the monks reached the unanimous decision to reopen the gates, albeit for a limited time. The Math will remain open between 8.30 am and 11 am and from 3.30 pm to 5.15 pm, as per the new schedule.

Colour-coded trams for easy route identification

Taking a leaf out of the Edinburgh's Granton tram network, Kolkata will have coloured tram routes from February. The colours assigned will include pink, red, yellow, violet, blue and green, said officials of the West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC). "For easy identification, tram-cars will have colour stripes on top. There will not be any shortage of tram-cars on any route even if one develops a snag," said WBTC official. Those buying a trampass will be get a pocket map of the routes. Trampass is an all-in-one-day easy on pocket pass that allows a commuter to travel on all trams throughout the day.

AIIMS resumes limited outpatient services

Limited outpatient service has been launched at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) in Kalyani on Tuesday. At present, medical services have been introduced to eight departments. The service will be launched in all departments step by step. The service will be available only if the name of a patient has been registered in advance, said the hospital authorities. The construction work of this hospital started in 2016 and admission of patients began in 2019. The outpatient facility will be open from 9 am to 1 pm. The facility was ensvisaged as a state-of-the-art institute offering premium healthcare at an affordable rate and train professionals in the best practices prevalent in the sector.

1,00,000
people who tested positive for Covid-19 have died in Britain so far, data shows

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	5	-5	SNY	Los Angeles	18	8	SNY
Colombo	31	23	TDS	Melbourne	26	15	TDS
Dhaka	27	14	SNY	Moscow	2	0	LC
Dubai	26	16	SNY	New York	2	-4	LC
Houston	15	7	SNY	Singapore	31	24	TDS
Istanbul	12	8	LC	Toronto	-1	-5	LC
London	12	9	LC	Washington	6	1	LC

GOP WAVERS ON IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Democrats think it is an open-and-shut case, but Republicans are wary of Trump voters

WASHINGTON

HOUSE Democrats delivered the impeachment case against Donald Trump to the Senate for the start of his historic trial, but Republican senators were easing off their criticism of the former president and shunning calls to convict him over the deadly siege at the US Capitol.

It's an early sign of Trump's enduring sway over the party.

The nine House prosecutors carried the sole impeachment charge of "incitement of insurrection" across the Capitol on Monday night in a solemn and ceremonial march to the Senate along the same halls the rioters ransacked just weeks ago. In a scene reminiscent of just a year ago — Trump is the first president twice impeached — the lead House prosecutor, Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, stood before the Senate to read the House resolution charging "high crimes and misdemeanors."

But Republican denunciations of Trump have cooled since the Jan. 6 riot. Instead Republicans are presenting a tangle of legal arguments against the legitimacy of the trial and questioning whether Trump's repeated demands to overturn Joe Biden's election really amounted to incitement.

Clerk of the House Cheryl Johnson, along with acting House Sergeant-at-Arms Tim Blodgett, leads the Democratic House impeachment managers as they walk through Statuary Hall in the Capitol on Monday, to deliver to the Senate the article of impeachment against former US President Donald Trump | AP

What seemed for some Democrats like an open-and-shut case that played out for the world on live television, as Trump encouraged a rally mob to "fight like hell" for his presidency, is running into a Republican Party that feels very differently. Not only are there legal concerns, but senators are wary of crossing the former president and his legions of followers — who are their voters. Security remains tight at the Capitol.

Senator John Cornyn, R-Texas, asked if Congress starts holding impeachment trials of former officials, what's next: "Could we go back and try President Obama?"

Besides, he suggested, Trump has already been held to account. "One way in our system you get punished is losing an election."

Arguments in the Senate trial will begin the week of Feb. 8, and the case against Trump, the first former president to face impeachment trial, will test a political party still sorting itself out for the post-Trump era. Republican senators are balancing the demands of deep-pocketed donors who are distancing themselves from Trump and voters voters who demand loyalty to him. *AP*

Yellen confirmed as Treasury secretary

The US Senate on Monday voted by a wide margin to confirm Janet Yellen as the first woman to lead the Treasury Department, giving her a key role in Congress negotiations over a huge Covid-19 economic relief package. Yellen is not new to the role of trailblazer, as she also was the first woman to lead the Federal Reserve, from 2014 to 2018, and previously the White House Council of Economic Advisors. Her immediate job in the first weeks of the new administration will be to help win Congress approval for President Joe Biden's $1.9 trillion rescue package.

US military eyes new bases in Saudi Arabia

The US military is exploring the possibility of using a Red Sea port in Saudi Arabia and an additional two airfields in the kingdom amid heightened tensions with Iran, the military said Tuesday. While describing the work as "contingency" planning, the US military said it already has tested unloading and shipping cargo overland from Saudi Arabia's port at Yanbu, a crucial terminal for oil pipelines in the kingdom. Using Yanbu, as well as air bases at Tabuk and Taif along the Red Sea, would give the US military more options on a key waterway.

McConnell drops filibuster demand

WASHINGTON

SENATE Republican leader Mitch McConnell backed off his demand that Democrats preserve the procedural tool known as the filibuster, easing a standoff with new Majority Leader Chuck Schumer as the two negotiated a power-sharing deal in the closely divided chamber.

McConnell said late Monday he had essentially accomplished his goal after two Democratic senators said they would not agree to changing the rules to end the filibuster, which would require a 60-vote threshold to advance most laws. Without the support of all Democratic senators, a rules change would fail.

"With these assurances, I look forward to moving ahead with a power-sharing agreement modeled on that precedent," McConnell said in a statement. He did not name the Democrats, but West Virginia's Joe Manchin and Arizona's Kyrsten Sinema had expressed doubts on doing away with the tool.

Schumer's office said the Republican leader had no choice but to set aside his demands.

"We're glad Senator McConnell threw in the towel and gave up on his ridiculous demand," said Justin Goodman, a spokesman. "We look forward to organizing the Senate under Democratic control and start getting big, bold things done for the American people." *AP*

Rioters deliberately leave digital trail for US police

WASHINGTON

THESE suspects weren't exactly in hiding.

"THIS IS ME," one man posted on Instagram with a hand emoji pointing to himself in a picture of the violent mob descending on the U.S. Capitol. "Sooo we've stormed Capitol Hill lol," one woman texted someone while inside the building. "I just wanted to incriminate myself a little lol," another wrote on Facebook about a selfie he took inside during the Jan. 6 riot.

In dozens of cases, supporters of President Donald Trump downright flaunted their activity on social media on the day of the deadly insurrection. Some, apparently realizing they were in trouble with the law, deleted their accounts only to discover their friends and family members had already taken screenshots of their selfies, videos and comments and sent them to the FBI.

Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier at the Capitol on Jan 6 | AP

Their total lack of concern over getting caught and their friends' willingness to turn them in has helped authorities charge about 150 people with federal crimes. But even with the help from the rioters themselves, investigators must still work rigorously to link the images to the vandalism. *AP*

DIGITAL ECONOMY

EU urges US to rein in Big Tech

WASHINGTON

The European Union on Tuesday called on US President Joe Biden to help draw up a common rule book to rein in the power of big tech companies like Facebook and Twitter and combat the spread of fake news that is eating away at Western democracies.

In a speech to the Davos World Economic Forum, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen urged the Biden administration to join forces against "the darker sides of the digital world," which she said was partly behind the "shock" storming of Capitol Hill on Jan. 6.

"The business model of online platforms has an impact and not only on free and fair competition, but also on our democracies, our security and on the quality of our information," von der Leyen said. "That is why we need to contain this immense power of the big digital companies."

The head of the EU's executive body called on the White House to join the 27-nation bloc's efforts, saying that "together, we could create a digital economy rule book that is valid worldwide," and would encompass data protection, privacy rules and the security of critical infrastructure.

No matter how tempting it may have been for Twitter to switch off President Trump's account, such serious interference with freedom of expression should not be based on company rules alone

Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission President

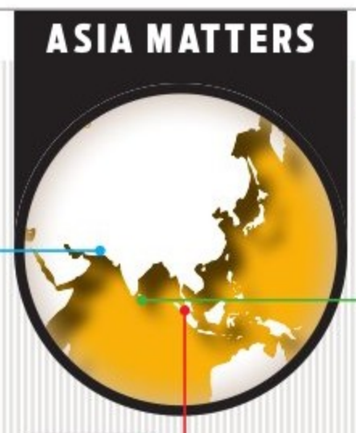
In December, the Commission proposed two new pieces of EU legislation to better protect consumers and their rights online, make tech platforms more accountable, and improve digital competition, building on the bloc's data protection rules.

Von der Leyen said: "We want the platforms to be transparent about how their algorithms work." *AP*

Twitter launches Wikipedia-style factchecking project

Twitter is enlisting its users to help combat misinformation on its service by flagging and notating misleading and false tweets. The pilot program unveiled Monday, called Birdwatch, allows a preselected group of users — for now, only in the U.S. — who sign up through Twitter. Those who want to sign up must have a U.S.-based phone carrier, verified email and phone number, and no recent Twitter rule violations. Twitter said it wants both experts and non-experts to write Birdwatch notes. It cited Wikipedia as a site that thrives with non-expert contributions. "In concept testing, we've seen non-experts write concise, helpful and easy-to-understand notes, often citing valuable expert sources," the company wrote in a blog post. The program will start with 1,000 users and eventually expand beyond the US. The company said the Birdwatch service will not replace other labels and fact checks Twitter currently uses.

ASIA MATTERS



PAKISTAN

Opposition backs out from talks with govt

Pakistan's Opposition alliance has backed out from holding talks with the Imran Khan government, widening political rift between the two sides. A three-member government delegation, which had met the Opposition leaders on Friday, seeking better relations at least in Parliament, were to hold another round of talks with Opposition parties on Monday. However, following the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz parliamentary party's meeting in the Parliament House, which was also addressed by party's vice president Maryam Nawaz, the Opposition dropped the idea of holding the talks, the Dawn News reported. Instead it was all set to stage a protest during the National Assembly session if the treasury had managed to bring in the required number of members to the House after quorum was pointed out by a PML-N member.

INDONESIA

$10 bn investments for new sovereign wealth fund

Indonesia has lured investments of about $10 billion for its first sovereign wealth fund expected to launch later this year, a minister said on Tuesday. The commitments include an informal letter of interest for up to $2 billion from the Caisse de Depot et Placement du Quebec, a Canadian pension fund, and as much as $1.5 billion from Dutch pension fund APG, Indonesia's economic affairs minister Airlangga Hartarto said in a presentation. Since the middle of last year, the government has met with more than 50 global investors, Hartarto said, with Indonesia targeting some $20 billion in commitments.

SRI LANKA

Cremation rule violates rights, says UN group

A group of U.N experts has criticized Sri Lanka's requirement that those who die of Covid-19 be cremated, even it goes against a family's religious beliefs, and warned that decisions based on "discrimination and aggressive nationalism" could incite hatred and violence. The experts, who are part of the Special Procedures of the U.N Human Rights Council, said in a statement that rule amounts to a human rights violation. "We deplore the implementation of such public health decisions based on discrimination, aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism amounting to persecution of Muslims and other minorities in the country," the experts said. Sri Lanka introduced the rule in March, saying there was a risk that bodies with the coronavirus could contaminate the ground water if they were buried.

Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim | AFP

Latin America's richest man has Covid-19

MEXICO CITY

Mexican telecoms billionaire Carlos Slim, one of the world's richest men, is being treated for Covid-19 but has only mild symptoms, the 80-year-old mogul's family said Monday.

"He's very well. He is making very good progress with Covid-19 after more than a week of minor symptoms," the tycoon's son, Carlos Slim Domit, said on Twitter.

Slim and his family, who control mobile telecom giant America Movil, are worth an estimated $59.9 billion, according to Forbes magazine, making him Latin America's richest man. Through his foundation, he is helping to fund joint production in Mexico and Argentina of the coronavirus vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford for distribution in Latin America.

The announcement came a day after Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he, too, had Covid-19. *AFP*

IMF EXPECTS U.S. & CHINA TO RECOVER MORE STRONGLY

Optimism that vaccines will bring Covid-10 under control, coupled with stimulus in major economies, has boosted the 2021 global growth forecast to 5.5% (Chart 1), the IMF said on Tuesday. The IMF also said that by 2022, the economies of the US and China will be only 1.5% smaller than they were pre-pandemic (Chart 2)

New variants' impact

In Europe, where governments have ordered new lockdowns and even curfews amid surging cases -- as well as a new, more infectious variant -- the IMF slashed growth forecasts.

Much depends on the outcome of this race between a mutating virus and vaccines and the ability of policies to provide effective support until the pandemic ends. There remains tremendous uncertainty

IMF chief economist Gita Gopinath

Positive outlook for the US In the United States, which approved another large stimulus package at the end of December, the fund expects growth to be a full two points higher than previously projected at 5.1%, which would be the strongest rate since 1984

CHART 1

Vaccine-fueled hope

IMF forecasts for 2021 GDP growth, in percent

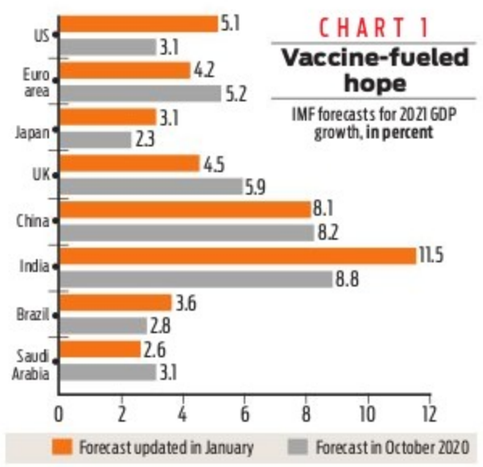
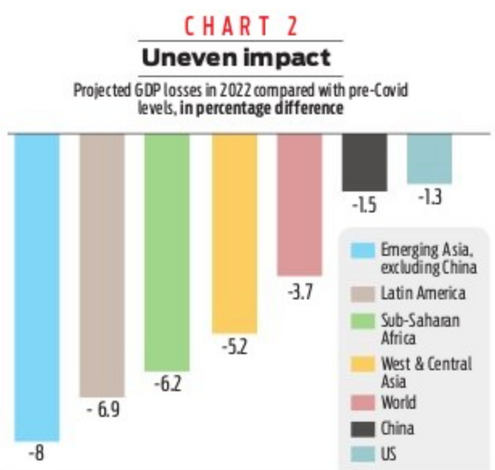


CHART 2

Uneven impact

Projected GDP losses in 2022 compared with pre-Covid levels, in percentage difference



$22 TRILLION the projected cumulative output loss over 2020 to 2025, compared to pre-Covid levels, the IMF said

Myanmar army doesn't rule out staging a coup

NAYPYIDAW

Myanmar's powerful military on Tuesday raised the spectre of staging a coup as it ramped up demands for an investigation into alleged voter fraud during last year's election, swept by Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) won November's poll in a landslide, but has been much criticised by rights groups for its disenfranchisement of voters in conflict-wracked regions.

Major General Zaw Min Tun | AFP

The military-aligned opposition disputed the results, while the army has for weeks alleged widespread voter irregularities, claiming to have found 8.6 million cases of fraud.

Military spokesman Major General Zaw Min Tun on Tuesday renewed calls for the country's embattled election commission to provide final voter lists for cross-checking – a demand that so far has not been met.

"Not resolving this in line with the law means this is a political crisis," he told reporters in Myanmar's capital Naypyidaw.

Zaw Min Tun added that military chief Min Aung Hlaing -- arguably Myanmar's most powerful individual -- has already pointed out "dishonesty and unfairness" during the election.

When pressed on the possibility of a coup, the spokesman refused to be drawn, but did not rule it out. *AFP*

ITALY IN TURMOIL AFTER PM RESIGNS

ROME

ITALIAN Premier Giuseppe Conte resigned Tuesday after a key coalition ally pulled his party's support over Conte's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, setting the stage for consultations this week to determine if he can form a third government.

Conte tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella, who held off on any immediate decision other than to ask Conte to keep the government running in the near-term, Mattarella's office said. The president will begin consulting with leaders of parties on Wednesday.

Giuseppe Conte

Conte is hoping to get Mattarella's support to try to form a new coalition government that can steer the country as it battles the pandemic and an economic recession and creates a spending plan for the 209 billion euros Italy is getting in European Union recovery funds.

Conte's coalition government was thrown into turmoil earlier this month when a junior party headed by ex-Premier Matteo Renzi yanked its support. Conte won confidence votes in parliament last week, but fell short of an absolute majority in the Senate, forcing him to the gamble of resigning. Mattarella, Italy's largely ceremonial head of state, can ask Conte to try to form a broader coalition government, appoint a largely technical government to steer the country through the pandemic or dissolve parliament and call polls two years early.

The current coalition of the 5-Star Movement, Democratic Party and smaller Leu party are all hoping for a third Conte government. *AFP*

EXPRESS READ

Merkel aide floats long suspension to debt rule

Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff has floated the idea of Germany suspending rules to prevent the government running up new debt for several years. In an article for *Handelsblatt*, Helge Braun advocated stabilising employees' social welfare contributions through the end of 2023.

China offers flight refunds to curb travel

Chinese airlines are offering refunded tickets as coronavirus continues to spread in the northeast. The offer Tuesday from the government's aviation authority comes amid a push to prevent people traveling during the Lunar New Year holiday next month. China has largely curbed the virus' spread locally.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BUSINESS

10 BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY 27.01.2021 | newindianexpress.com

Market Watch

GOLD		SILVER		FOREX	
24 carat (1 gm)	₹4,933	₹0.20 Per kg	₹66,500	Dollar	72.94
22 carat (1 gm)	₹4,833	₹200 Per gm	₹66.5	Euro	88.62

Govt deficit to hit post-reform era high in FY22

The deficit is pegged at 8.5 per cent given the need for higher spending in the budget

SUNITHA NATTI

FISCAL deficit is likely to double this financial year, but that is not the most frightening fact. If forecasts are to be believed, the Centre's deficit may remain elevated at about 5.5 per cent of GDP next fiscal. And if you consider states' components, given the need for higher spending, the general government deficit could settle at 8.5 per cent in FY22 — a level last seen prior to the 1991 economic reforms phase.

Worryingly, the Centre's FY21 deficit anticipated at 7-7.5 per cent of GDP will also be the highest reported figure in over three decades.

The last time the deficit breached the 6.5 per cent mark was during the global financial crisis in FY10. Prior to this, there have been periods of macroeconomic instability invariably been pre-dated by fiscal adventurism. For instance, the general deficit widened to 8.6 per cent during 1984-85 and breached the 9 per cent threshold in the ensuing years. During the 1990s, it rose sharply to over 10 per cent forcing the government to introduce the FRBM Act in 2000, which was eventually enacted into a law in 2003.

There was no massive fiscal stimulus in 2020, still, the significant shortfall in total receipts is likely to double the deficit to over 7 per cent of GDP this fiscal from the budgeted 3.5 per cent. Additionally, state governments were permitted to raise additional borrowings to tide over the revenue crunch in FY21, implying that the general government deficit could print at 12.2 per cent of GDP — the highest levels recorded in the past several decades.

But much before the pandemic began aggravating the situation, owing to economic slowdown, the government had already invoked the 'escape clause' in FY20 itself.

Analysts expect the Finance Minister to present a clear and reasonable glide path for fiscal consolidation next week. As per the revised budget estimates, FY20 deficit touched 3.8 per cent of GDP as against the target of 3.3 per cent. Subsequently, it expected the deficit to decline to 3.5 per cent in FY21, and 3.3 per cent in FY22.

The good news, however, is that the government appears keen on adhering to deficit targets. Moreover, given the lack of receipts and forced higher spending, experts aren't ruling out a one-off cess/surcharge to make up for the revenue loss. Plus, the 15th Finance Commission's recommendations on revenue sharing and deficit targets, the borrowing permission to be granted by the government and the extent of improvement that can be realised in states' own tax revenue, will guide state fiscal trends in FY22.

Budget 2021 likely to see hike in indirect taxes

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

STARING at a revenue shortfall of over ₹6.5 lakh crore and with less headroom for raising direct tax collection, the government is mulling to increase indirect taxes, which includes cess and excise duty, to make up for the deficit.

"The tax collection is not up to the mark and we do not see a major revival in trend in the first six months of the current fiscal. One way is to increase direct taxation but the finance ministry has ruled out any increase in the tax slabs. There can be some tweaks. However, to compensate for the loss, there may be a spike in indirect taxes, new cess, and some duty hikes," a senior official from the finance ministry said. According to the official, we can expect hikes in import duties, which will be aligned to the government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, and the items where duty is likely to be increased has already been shortlisted. "The government has increased the import duty of many items and now there may be fresh levies on some of the items. Also, the talk is on Covid-19 cess. However there could be last minute changes," the official added.

Tax pie gets altered post pandemic

India's tax pie seems to have undergone a subtle change post Covid, with direct tax collections seeing a sharp drop. The share of indirect tax, however, went up

This fiscal year, tax collection and the proceeds from disinvestment in state-owned entities are likely to miss the budget estimates target by over ₹6.5 lakh crore. The government had initially estimated ₹24.23 lakh crore to come from direct and indirect taxes and ₹2.1 lakh crore from disinvestment. However, the revised estimates have pegged the collection at around ₹20 lakh crore, down by 25 per cent.

Meanwhile, the official brushed aside any major concern regarding revenues.

"There is no need to worry too much about the revenues. This was an exceptional year so many things were derailed but things are now improving. Next fiscal year, the divestment targets are going to be ambitious so it will make up for the loss. We are also tightening the GST system and tax collection is certainly going to get a boost. So things will be not as bad as it is looking like," the official added.

The union budget is slated to be presented in the Parliament on February 1 and the budget session will be held between January 29 and April 8, 2021.

IT industry seeks bigger allocations for advanced tech, data security in Budget

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

AT a time when data privacy concerns have assumed significance, the tech industry leaders are pinning hopes on fresh investments in advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to build cloud-based infrastructure. India's $190 billion IT sector, which managed to post strong quarterly profits amid the pandemic, will also benefit from digital–first budgetary allocations and policy announcements especially for critical sectors like finances, healthcare, education and agriculture. Besides, the nation's maiden Data protection bill, which is reportedly being considered by the Joint parliamentary committee, is also likely to be tabled during the upcoming Budget session.

According to Deepak Mittal, co-founder of digital tech firm To The New, investing in AI and ML will be a critical support as Indian organisations move to cloud-based services and remote working continues to play an enhanced role in everyday life. "Making data and assets that were previously on-premises to the cloud, in order to reap performance and efficiency gains, is a smart move. But it also introduces risk to these data and assets. Attackers can use unsecured credentials and permissions to access what they shouldn't, putting sensitive data at risk. AI and ML can automate the process of getting these vast numbers under control," he added.

The IT industry has been the backbone for Digital India and Start-up India. Providing the right incentives to the industry will be the key for India's economic revival.

Sameer Nigam, CEO & co-founder, Stratbeans

As India emerges from the economic slowdown, experts say that the IT industry will be at the forefront of this recovery and hence the government should offer tax rebates to software exporters as well as for import of technology products into India. "Providing the right incentives to the IT industry will be the key for the country's economic revival. One such incentive is to simplify the tax-related complexities to encourage global trade of software products from and to India. This will help increase revenue for the exchequer that can flow back into the country for socio-economic welfare. Another important area for improvement is to introduce measures that encourage corporates and individuals to pay taxes and contribute to the nation's progress," said Sameer Nigam, chief executive officer and co-founder, Stratbeans.

ASIANOMICS

JAPAN

HOUSE PRICES IN TOKYO HIT RECORD HIGHS

Prices of newly-built apartments in Tokyo approached record highs seen during Japan's asset-inflated bubble era of 1990s, the country's Real Estate Economic Institute said. Higher construction costs ahead of the Olympics and the popularity of high-rise condominiums in formerly industrial waterfront areas helped drive the average apartment price up to 60.84 million yen, the highest since 1990 when it reached a record 61.23 million yen. The most expensive unit was a 690 million yen ($6.65 million) condominium in Daikanyama, it added. Sales fell 12.8 per cent over last year to 27,228 units, or, down around 70 per cent from 1990 levels. Notably, the Tokyo stock market's Nikkei 225 average rose about 16 per cent last year. And unlike cities such as New York that saw an exodus to the suburbs during the pandemic, Tokyo residents moved to new developments in central locations to reduce commuting time.

HONG KONG

US BLOCKS WTO TRADE DISPUTE

The United States has blocked a decision by Hong Kong to escalate a Trump-era trade disagreement at the WTO, in its first meeting on disputes at the Geneva-based body. Hong Kong proposed creation of a WTO panel to rule on the trade dispute. Washington can only block it once and Hong Kong, a member in its own right at the 164-member body, can raise it again next month. The so-called, Made-in-China dispute, opened by Hong Kong on November, 3 is regarding a US rule stipulating that goods from the special administrative region of China be marked as coming from China and was announced by US Customs and Border Protection last August, breaking with a former policy that allowed Hong Kong to be named as a place of origin. The closed-door meeting was Washington's first chance to weigh in on long-standing active trade disputes as well as deadlocked talks over revamping the WTO's top appeals bench.

INDONESIA

NEW SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND NETS $10 BN

Indonesia has received investment commitments of up to $10 billion from global firms for its ambitious sovereign wealth fund, according to officials. The Indonesia Investment Authority (INA) aims to attract foreign funds as co-investors, unlike other sovereign wealth funds set up by developed countries to manage oil revenues or forex reserves. With a target of managing $20 billion, the INA will be seeded by Indonesia's government with $5 billion in cash and other assets. Canadian pension fund Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) has signed an informal letter of interest to invest up to $2 billion, alongside an up to $1.5 billion commitment from Dutch pension fund APG. Indonesia has previously reported investment interest of up to $6 billion by the US International Development Finance Corporation and Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Investors pour $10.14 bn into start-ups amid Covid-19 woes

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

INDIA's start-ups are believed to have garnered $10.14 billion in funding in over 1,200 deals in 2020 despite the global pandemic. A report by consulting firm HexGn have revealed that though investments received in 2020 is lower than the $14.5 billion raised in 2019, the number of deals were higher by 20 per cent. Seed-stage investment deals grew by 50 per cent from $ 353 million over 420 deals in 2019 to $ 372 million over 672 deals in 2020.

"This is a good sign for people looking to plunge into start-ups, as early-stage investors are now keen to back risk-takers early on," the HexGn study said. Start-ups that attracted most funding in 2020 included Zomato ($1.02 billion), Byju's ($922 million), Phonepe ($807 million), Unacademy ($260 million) and Ecom Express ($250 million). The country's start-up funding deals kept India in the fourth place globally behind the US, China and the UK. India has been locked in this position for the last three years. However, the start-ups were concentrated in three regions — Bengaluru, Delhi NCR and Mumbai — which together accounted for 90 per cent of the start-up investments in India. Bengaluru led with $4.3 billion in start-up investments, followed by Delhi NCR at $3 billion and Mumbai came third with $2 billion. Sector-wise, e-commerce attracted the highest investment with $3 billion, followed by fintech at $2.37 billion and edtech at $1.52 billion, the report stated.

Tata Motors unveils Safari, launch slated next month

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

TATA Motors on Tuesday officially revealed its latest offering — the Safari SUV in India. The homegrown carmaker has rebranded the upcoming seven-seater Harrier as Safari after having scrapped the old name Gravitas. Bookings for the 2021 Safari will commence on February 4 with deliveries to customers slated to begin after that, the company said.

The vehicle is expected to come at a price range of ₹16 lakh – ₹24 lakh. The new Safari will compete against the newly launched MG Hector Plus and soon-to-be launched new Mahindra XUV500. Additionally, Hyundai is expected to launch a seven-seat Creta-based SUV. At present, this small but fast growing segment is dominated by Toyota Innova Crysta. Safari will be made available in six, as well as seven-seat layouts.

The new Tata Safari is based on the company's impact 2.0 design and shares its Omega Arc platform with the Harrier SUV. However, it is longer and taller in size. Safari will be launched in six variants which include XE, XM, XT, XT+, XZ and XZ+. Under the hood, it is fitted with Harrier's 2.0-liter, 4-cylinder diesel engine which delivers 170 PS and 350 Nm of peak torque. The transmission options include the 6-speed manual and 6-speed torque converter automatic gearbox. It comes in three drive modes — Eco, City, and Sports. With this launch, Tata Motors is set to bring the Safari brand back into its portfolio after a gap of 14 months.

"The new Safari lives up to its legendary status but also offers plenty of modern provisions to live up to expectations of today's customers," said Pratap Bose, vice-president-Global Design at Tata Motors.

In its new avatar, the Safari Safari will also get the company's iRA connectivity suite, which offers functionalities like vehicle diagnostics and emergency calls. At present, this function is available with Nexon and Altroz iTurbo.

TODAY'S STOCK PICK

FEDERAL BANK

Current Price ₹71.20

Target Price ₹100

FB has delivered strong operating performance as the economy continues to recover from the COVID-19 shock. Retail loan growth is showing a healthy revival, led by robust trends in retail loans (Gold, LAP, and Housing). The bank's liability franchise remains strong, with a retail deposit mix of ~90% and healthy CASA growth, which would continue to aid margin.

— Motilal Oswal Securities Limited

Disclaimer: The views and recommendations made above are that of the individual analyst or broking company, and not that of *TNIE*.

ECONOMY

FICCI survey forecasts 8% GDP contraction in FY21, only agri to grow

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

INDIA's GDP at market prices will contract by 8 per cent in the financial year 2021, according to a survey of economists from industry, banking and financial sectors carried out by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).

Among the three main sectors of the Indian economy, agriculture is the only one which will register growth in the current fiscal year, as signalled by higher rabi acreage, good monsoons, higher reservoir levels and strong growth in tractor sales.

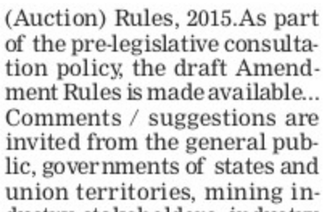
However, the industry and services sector, which were most severely hit due to the pandemic induced economic fallout, are expected to contract by 10 per cent and 9.2 per cent respectively during 2020-21, the survey noted. The annual median growth forecast by the industry body is based on responses from economists representing industry, banking and financial services sector. The survey was conducted in January. The median growth forecast for agriculture and allied activities has been pegged at 3.5 per cent for 2020-21. However, the economy is expected to perform much better in the next financial year, the participating economists said projecting a median GDP growth rate of 9.6 per cent. Economists feel that a large part of growth would be supported by massive government spending during the year. The participating economists called upon the central government to restructure its expenditure in favour of capital spending and announce temporary fiscal stimulus to support consumption in the form of income-tax breaks or direct income transfers, both of which will ensure more money in the hands of individuals.

Govt plans incentives for mining-block allocatees

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

WITH an aim to increase mineral output and reduce imports in the country, the government plans to provide incentives to mineral block allocatees for early commencement of production from the auctioned mines. The mines ministry plans to do the same through amendment of the mining rules and has sought comments and suggestions from stakeholders on the issue.

"The Ministry of Mines has prepared the Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2021 seeking to amend Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015.As part of the pre-legislative consultation policy, the draft Amendment Rules is made available... Comments / suggestions are invited from the general public, governments of states and union territories, mining industry, stakeholders, industry associations, and other persons and entities concerned, on the draft Amendment Rules," the mines ministry said in a notice on Tuesday.



A high-level committee (HLC), headed by vice-chairman of NITI Aayog, on mines, minerals and coal sectors was constituted by the government to give recommendations for enhancing exploration and domestic production, reducing imports and achieving rapid growth in exports. One of the key recommendations in the panel report is for providing incentive to successful bidders for early commencement of production from the auctioned mines. "In view of the HLC recommendations, it has been decided to provide in the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 that for fully explored blocks, there would be a 50 per cent rebate in the quoted revenue share, for the quantity of mineral produced and dispatched earlier than scheduled date of production as provided in tender document," said the ministry.

The incentives will further encourage the lessee to operationalise the mine and start production at an early date thereby increasing the mineral production in the country.

EXPRESS READ

MCRL scouts for CEO to rollout ₹1,700 cr project

New Delhi: Mahanadi Coal Railway Ltd (MCRL), a joint venture of MCL, IRCON and IDCO, is scouting for a CEO to implement coal evacuation infrastructure projects in Odisha, officials said. Initially, one corridor has been identified for the project, the estimated cost of which is ₹1,700 crore. This project will aid in creating railway evacuation infrastructure for Talcher mines.

Centre invites bids for NINL privatisation

New Delhi: The central government has invited bids to privatise Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd. (NINL), seeking to divest 93.7 per cent stake held by four central public sector enterprises and two Odisha government-owned companies. The divestment receipts would go to state-owned companies, and not to the government.

World economy to grow at 5.5pc

CONTINUED FROM P1

"WE are seeing India come back to its 2019 levels in 2021," Gopinath said. She, however, noted that cumulatively by the end of 2022, India's rate will be 9% below its pre-pandemic projected level. The IMF said the global economy is projected to grow 5.5% in 2021 and 4.2% in 2022. "The 2021 forecast is revised up 0.3 percentage point relative to the previous forecast, reflecting expectations of a vaccine-powered strengthening of activity later in the year and additional policy support in a few large economies," it added.

The IMF, however, warned that delays in vaccine rollout, widespread hesitancy in inoculation, shorter-than anticipated immunity from the vaccines could be a downside risk to recovery. It adds that winding down of policy support before economic recovery could further hurt global growth.

Inter coach Conte banned for 2 matches

Inter Milan coach Antonio Conte was suspended for two matches on Tuesday following a clash with referee Fabio Maresca over the weekend. Conte was sent off in stoppage time for protesting at the end of Saturday's 0-0 draw at Udinese. Conte will miss league matches against Benevento and Fiorentina.

THE GAMES PLAN: ROAD TO TOKYO

Organisers are expected to come up with detailed strategy on entry and exit of players and officials as early as next week

ASSOCIATED PRESS @ Tokyo

WITH calls for a cancellation mounting, pressure is building on Japanese organisers and the IOC to explain exactly how they plan to hold the Tokyo Olympics in the midst of a pandemic.

The International Olympic Committee and the local organisers are expected to roll out "Playbooks" next week that are to provide step-by-step details about how athletes and thousands of others will get safely in and out of Tokyo.

Both the organisers and the IOC have been vague for months, opening the door to speculation about a cancellation, or another postponement.

So what are the "Playbooks" and how will they work?
They are guidebooks that will be aimed at athletes and others — sponsors, officials, media and broadcasters — to explain about entering Japan for the Olympics. Rules could call for self-quarantines before leaving the home country. For certain, a negative test will be needed before getting on the plane. There will be more testing upon arrival in Japan, transportation in designated vehicles, and more daily testing in the Athletes Village, which — like the venues — will be turned into a "bubble." The rule books will be updated three times, adding new information as organisers learn more.

Why are organisers confident they can hold the Olympics and Paralympics?
Craig Spence, a spokesman for the International Paralympic Committee, listed four reasons: 1) Unlike 10 months ago, scientists know much more about the virus; 2) sports and health officials have learned how to hold sports events during the pandemic; 3) vaccines are now available; 4) the Olympics and Paralympics don't open for six months, time for the virus surge to ease entering the northern hemisphere summer.

What about vaccines?
This is a delicate area. Bach has encouraged all "participants" to be vaccinated, but says it will not be required. The IOC and other sports bodies are being warned that young, healthy athletes should not be prioritized ahead of the vulnerable and health care workers.

The Olympics have been cancelled five times — all during wartime. Why are officials pressing ahead amid the pandemic?
The last cancellations were in 1944. That was before much money was at stake. The IOC is now a commercial, wealthy sports business that relies on selling broadcast rights for almost 75% of its income. Another 18% is from sponsors. The IOC has only two major products to sell — the Summer and Winter Olympics.

Estimates suggest Tokyo is worth $2 billion-$3 billion in broadcast payments to the IOC. It has a reserve fund but must have the TV money. In addition, Japan has spent at least $25 billion to prepare.

A woman poses for a selfie in front of Olympic rings at Odaiba waterfront in Tokyo, on Tuesday. The postponed Games are scheduled to open on July 23 | AP

What about fans? Any from abroad?
Olympic Minister Seiko Hashimoto told a parliamentary session on Tuesday that the decision will be announced "by the spring." Indoor venues are likely to have fewer fans — if any — than outdoor stadiums. And it appears increasingly unlikely that fans from abroad can attend. Fewer fans means more costs for Japan. The local organising committee expected to received $800 million from ticket sales. Any shortfall will have to be made up by Japanese government entities.

In soft quarantine, seeking Open test

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@ Chennai

WHEN Sania Mirza walked off the pristine Australian Open court after losing to Tsvetana Pironkova in 2012, nobody would have marked it as an important day in the calendar then. It's been some nine years and that was the last time an Indian woman played in the singles event at a Major. Injuries meant Sania started focussing on her doubles game. A lack of depth meant there was nobody who could take up the singles mantle.

In recent years, however, Ankita Raina has shown that she is capable of ending that streak. In fact, during the Australian Open qualifiers held in Dubai, she was a set from qualifying to the main draw. Even if she lost to Olga Danilovic, she still made the trip to Melbourne as one among 12 eligible to fill lucky loser spots.

Staying in one of the quarantine hotels designated for tennis players, she is living a highly regimented lifestyle. In an interview to this daily, she speaks about it and need to work on her serve among other things. Excerpts:

Ankita Raina is hopeful of getting a chance to play in the main draw

In Dubai, you got to the final qualifying round. What are the main areas you feel you have improved in?
Not much in terms of that particular match, I was proud of the efforts I put in that day regardless of how I was feeling physically. I was very confident of qualifying for the main draw but my opponent played very solid. It was a great match and being the final round, nobody would let it go easy. I just felt after a set all, she was even more aggressive than the first set. In general, I have been working on my serve and that's something that doesn't improve overnight. It is a process.

How's the condition in Melbourne?
It's been good. I'm in the quarantine where I get to go to the venue for 5 hours for practice and training so it feels like a usual day. We get tested every day, we get the report by evening. It's both the nasal and saliva one. Glad everything's fine and I'm getting to practice.

What are some of the restrictions like?
We get the quarantine set meal which is pretty good and healthy. Even at the courts after practice during nutrition hour, whatever we order is free of charge. Some players still do delivery owing to a bigger appetite but I sometimes do order delivery as I prefer Indian. The food gets delivered at the reception and the players services drop it at our door. There are a lot of protocols to be followed here for the safety of the community here as they have zero cases. The protocols are in place for our safety as well. One of them is that we can't open our doors apart from these four reasons a) emergency, b) knock on door, c) to drop laundry outside, d) to take our food from the door.

When will you know whether you have made the main draw?
The list can move until the draw is made so (till) the very last moment. The tournament starts February 8 so will have chance until the first match is played I guess.

EXPRESS READ

Tuchel set to join Chelsea

LONDON: Thomas Tuchel was set to be named Chelsea manager on Tuesday several years after he first spoke with the Premier League giants about the job. The German replaces sacked Frank Lampard and will be 15th change of manager since Russian Roman Abramovich bought the club in 2003. Tuchel follows some noteworthy predecessors in Jose Mourinho and Carlo Ancelotti, who have also fallen foul of Abramovich in the past -- the Italian was fired a season after delivering the domestic double.

Ex-India goalkeeper Prasanta Dora no more

KOLKATA: Former India goalkeeper Prasanta Dora, who made a name for himself while playing for big three clubs of Kolkata Maidan, died on Tuesday. He was 44 and is survived by 12-year old son Adi and wife Soumi. According to his elder brother Hemanta, who also played as a goalkeeper for India and Mohun Bagan, Prasanta was diagnosed with Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) in December after he developed unremitting fever.

NorthEast United Fc beat ATKMB in ISL

GOA: NorthEast United FC delivered a solid second half performance to beat ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in their ISL encounter at the Fatorda Stadium on Tuesday. After Luis Machado (60th minute) broke the deadlock, Roy Krishna (72) equalised with a tap in, but it was NorthEast who had the final laugh with Federico Gallego (81) scoring the winner. This is the second straight win for Highlanders, who moved up the table to fifth with 18 points from 13 games.

GAME FACE

Tennis ace Leander Paes (right) & former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan take part in an exhibition cricket match at the CC & FC ground, in Kolkata, on Tuesday | BIBHASH LODH

Syed Mushtaq Ali T20: Karnataka out after horror show with willow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA'S struggle with the bat continued on Tuesday as they were knocked out by Punjab in the quarterfinal of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in Ahmedabad. The defending champions faltered against a quality pace-attack of Punjab and was bowled out for a paltry 87 at Sardar Vallabhai Patel Stadium. Punjab reached the target in the 13th over to win the contest by nine wickets and reach the semifinals.

After disappointing performances from their batsmen in the group stages of the T20 tournament, Karun Nair's men were expected to put on a better show in the crucial last-eight encounter. However, it didn't happen. Tuesday's score was their lowest in the tournament this season.

Having been asked to bat first by Punjab, Karnataka fell like a pack of cards after a decent start in the first three overs. Skipper Nair's dismissal triggered the collapse after he was out for a nine-ball 12. Opener Devdutt Padikkal made 11 off 10. From 24/0, Karnataka was reeling at 26/4, losing Pavan Deshpande and BR Sharath in quick succession. All-rounder Shreyas Gopal hit 13 off 11 deliveries. With half of the batting line-up back in the pavilion inside eight overs, there was little that the middle and lower-order batsmen could do.

Punjab reached semifinals after beating Karnataka by nine wickets | BCCI

Aniruddha Joshi tried to hang on, scoring a patient 34-ball 27. However, with no support from the other end, Karnataka couldn't post a challenging target. Only four of their batsmen scored in double digits. Punjab's pace trio of Siddharth Kaul, Arshdeep Singh and Siddarth Kaul shared seven wickets between them. Ramandeep Singh accounted for two wickets while leg-spinner Mayank Markande scalped one. Defending a low-score meant Karnataka needed extraordinary performance from bowlers. Pacer Abhimanyu Mithun gave an early breakthrough, dismissing Abishek Sharma for a 6-ball 4, but it wasn't enough.

Brief scores (quarterfinals): Karnataka 87 in 17.2 ovs (Siddarth Kaul 3/15) lost to Punjab 89/1 in 12.4 ovs (Prabhsimran 49 n.o, Mandeep Singh 35 n.o).

Sindhu, Srikanth looking for change in fortunes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

INDIA'S elite badminton singles players have been far from their best in recent times. The duo of PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth will be looking to change that during the BWF World Tour Finals, beginning in Bangkok on Wednesday.

Rubbing shoulders against the cream of the sport, it goes without saying they face a tall order. Especially given the fact that Sindhu, reigning world champ and Olympic silver medallist, has been clubbed in Group B alongside World No 1 Tai Tzu-ying of Chinese Taipei and home favourites Ratchanok Intanon and Pornpawee Chochuwong. Sindhu had gone down against Intanon at the recently-held Thailand Open. The score (21-13, 21-9) reflected poorly on Sindhu, who has been India's leading shuttler in the last few years or so.

Before that downfall, she had crashed out in the very first round in the first tournament in Thailand. So when she locks horns with Tai, who finished runner-up in both the Thailand Super 1000 meets, in her opening match, she'll have to bring her A game in order to challenge her rival.

Srikanth has a comparatively less daunting rivals in his group. He'll face tricky tests against Denmark's Anders Antonsen, Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei and Hong Kong's NG Ka Long Angus.

A hit and a miss in recent years, Srikanth had more off-field drama than court action in the last few weeks. He had pulled out of the first Thailand Open due to an injury and then upon return in the next meet, he was forced to withdraw without playing second round after roommate B Sai Praneeth tested positive for coronavirus.

The former World No 1 will open his campaign against Antonsen. A good show here could spur Srikanth ahead of the crucial Olympic qualifiers which is set to begin next month.

THE TAMILNADU COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED
AAVIN ILLAM 3-A, Pasumpon Muthuramalinganar Salai (Chamiers Road), Nandanam, Chennai- 600 035.
Telephone : 044-23464500, Fax : 044-23464505, E-mail:aavinmmp@gmail.com

REF. NO:12074/MP1/2019 **TENDER NOTICE** Dated : 22.01.2021

The TCMPF Ltd., invites **TWO PART OPEN TENDERS** by way of **OFF LINE / E-SUBMISSION** from the Manufacturers / Suppliers for Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 500 Crossbred Jersey Cows Unit at Advanced Institute for **Integrated Research on Livestock and Animal Sciences (AIIRLIVAS)** at Thalaivasal Koot Road in Salem District under NABARD RIDF XXVI Scheme for the year 2020-21.

Sl. No.	Name of the items / Works	Pre-bid Meeting	Tender Submission	Technical Bid Opening
1	Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Dairy farm comprising of 500 Crossbred Jersey Cows with RFID Animal Identification systems, Automated Rotary Milking Parlour, Advanced Feeding systems, Cow comfort equipments, Manure handling equipments with latest technology.	10.02.2021 at 2.00 PM	03.03.2021 Upto 02.00 PM	03.03.2021 at 02.15 PM

Tender Document sale between **01.02.2021** to **02.03.2021** from **11.00 A.M. to 3.00 P.M.,** cost - **Rs.2,000.00 + 18% GST** and Rs.100.00 extra by post. For downloading tender documents, EMD and other details, refer website **www.tenders.tn.gov.in** and **www.aavinmilk.com** for **off line** / **www.tntenders.gov.in** for **E-submission.** Tender documents can be downloaded at free of cost.

DIPR/ 503 /TENDER/ 2021 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (E-TENDERING PROCESS)

Sl no:	Specification No.	Description of Work/Materials	Due date & Time for submission of e-tender
1	Coal (Ship) - 75	ITEM 1 : ONE SELF TRIMMING SUPRAMAX GEARED VESSEL WITH THE LAY DAYS FROM 20th FEB 2021 to 5th MARCH 2021 FOR 9+3 MONTHS CHOPTION +/-1 MONTH CHOPTION ITEM 2: ONE SELF TRIMMING SUPRAMAX GEARED VESSEL WITH THE LAY DAYS FROM 1st MARCH 2021 TO 15TH MARCH 2021 FOR 9+3 MONTHS CHOPTION +/-1 MONTH CHOPTION	11.02.2021 Upto 15:30 Hours.
2	Coal (Ship) - 76	ITEM 1: ONE SELF TRIMMING PANAMAX GEARLESS/GEARED (OFFERED AS GEARLESS) VESSEL WITH THE LAY DAYS FROM 15TH TO 30TH MARCH 2021 FOR 9+3 MONTHS CHOPTION +/-1 MONTH CHOPTION ITEM 2: ONE SELF TRIMMING PANAMAX GEARLESS/GEARED (OFFERED AS GEARLESS) VESSEL WITH THE LAY DAYS FROM 20TH MARCH 2021 TO 5TH APRIL 2021 FOR 3+3 MONTHS CHOPTION	11.02.2021 Upto 15:30 Hours.

The tender Specification can be downloaded from TANGEDCO Website, **www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in,** at free of cost . Tender will be opened through the NIC Portal **https:tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app**

DIPR/ 471 /Tender/2021 **CHIEF ENGINEER/MECHANICAL/COAL**

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
PERIYAR VAIGAI BASIN CIRCLE, MADURAI - 625001

Short term Tender Notice No.12/D4/C.250/2020/Date: 25.01.2021

For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu, tenders are invited and the sealed Tenders should be submitted in main sealed cover containing (1) Pre-qualification documents and E.M.D. in a separate inner sealed cover and (2) Price Tender Schedule duly filled in, in another inner sealed cover with the name of work duly superscribed on the covers will be received by the Superintending Engineer, WRD., Periyar Vaigai Basin Circle, Madurai for the following works from the eligible contractors registered under Class-I (State level) in Public Works Department.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Work Value + GST 12%	E.M.D.
1	Modernisation of the 18th Canal from LS 0 Km to 20 Km in Uthamapalayam Taluk of Theni District	Rs.51,90,68,066/- Rs. 6,22,88,168/- **Rs.58,13,56,234/-**	**Rs. 29,20,000/-**
2	Modernisation of the 18th Canal Extension from LS 0 Km to 7 Km in Bodinayakkanur Taluk of Theni District	Rs.17,28,57,600/- Rs. 2,07,42,912/- **Rs.19,36,00,512/-**	**Rs. 9,80,000/-**
3	Modernisation of the 18th Canal Extension from LS 7 Km to 14 Km in Bodinayakkanur Taluk of Theni District.	Rs.17,37,18,310/- Rs. 2,08,46,197/- **Rs.19,45,64,507/-**	**Rs. 9,85,000/-**

E.M.D. to be drawn in favour of : **The Executive Engineer, WRD., PWD., Manjalar Basin Division, Periyakulam**

Cost of Tender Document + GST (Each Works) : **Rs.15,000/- + Rs.1800/-**

Tender document can be downloaded free from **www.tenders.tn.gov.in**

Date and Time of Tender document available	**01.02.2021 to 25.02.2021 upto 5.45 PM**
Submission of Tenders	**26.02.2021 upto 3.00 PM**
Date and time of Opening	**26.02.2021 at 3.30 PM**
Place of Opening of Tenders	**O/o. the Superintending Engineer, WRD., Periyar Vaigai Basin Circle, Madurai-1**

In the event of specified date for submission of tender is declared as a holiday, tender will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. Other details can be obtained from the above office.

DIPR/540/TENDER/2021 **Superintending Engineer, WRD., PWD., Periyar Vaigai Basin Circle, Madurai.**

LOCAL EXPRESS

Vijaya CC players delivered an all-round game in the final to win the title

Vijaya Cricket Club emerge champions

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

VIJAYA Cricket Club beat Vultures Cricket CLub by 137 runs to lift the KSCA Group I-I, II, III Division U19 inter club tournament here on Tuesday. Thippa Reddy, Dhruv P and Yash N played an important role in the win with the trio scoring 68, 84 and 65 not out to help their team score 285/4. Vultures were bowled out for 148 runs as Thippa also managed to pick two wickets to cap off an all-round performance.

Brief Scores: Vijaya Cricket Club: 285/4 in 50 overs [Thippa Reddy 68, Dhruv P 84, Yash N 65 n.o] **beat** Vultures Cricket Club: 148/10 in 44 overs [Shamanth SM 43, Thippa Reddy 2/6] by 137 runs.

Combined City XI collect three points

Combined City XI collected three points against Combined Moffusil XI in the SA Srinivasan memorial. The former enjoyed a first innings lead despite Combined Moffusil's Dheemanth B scoring a ton. They were dismissed for 316 runs while Combined City had put up 337 runs on the board.

Stepehen stuns Praneeth, reach quarters

Bangalore lad Stephen Dylan came up with an imperssive display to beat Praneeth Chittepu Dora of Telangana 6-4, 6-3 in the pre-quarterfinal tie of the boys U12 category of the KSLTA Talent Series here on Tuesday.

How studies indicate the UK variant is more deadly

A research rundown points to a 'realistic possiblity' that infection with the new variant is associated with an increased risk of death

RESEARCH

PARIS: The announcement that the coronavirus strain sweeping Britain could be more deadly as well as more transmissible has raised fresh concerns about the variant that has spread to dozens of countries.

Initially British experts said that their evidence suggested the new strain circulating in the UK -- one of several to have emerged internationally in recent months -- was 50%-70% more transmissible.

On Friday, however, the government said the new variant could also be 30-40 % more deadly, although it stressed the assessment relied on sparse data.

In mid-January, two separate studies by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Imperial College London were presented to Britain's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG).

They linked data from people who tested positive for the virus in the community -- rather than in hospital -- with death data and found a roughly 30 % increase in the risk of death associated with the new strain.

The groups used slightly different methods, but both matched people with the new variant to those with the older variants, taking into account variables like age and location and controlling for hospitals being under pressure.

Other studies by Exeter University and Public Health England also found higher deaths and both came up with even higher figures.

Based on these analyses, NERVTAG said there was "a realistic possibility" that infection with the new variant is associated with an increased risk of death compared with previously circulating variants.

"Unfortunately, it looks as if this virus might be both" more infectious and potentially more deadly, John Edmunds, a professor in LSHTM's Centre for the Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases, told a press briefing Monday.

Viral load to blame?

Researchers think it could be the same set of mutations that has made it more infectious -- although all stress more study is needed. One mutation in particular increases the virus' ability to latch on more strongly to human cells. Bjorn Meyer, virologist at France's Institut Pasteur, told AFP that the issue could be viral load. "The virus might not have evolved to be more deadly as such, but it might have evolved to grow more or better, which could cause more damage in a patient overall," he said.

Will variants alter impact of Covid drugs?

MEDICINE

LONDON: Peter Horby, an emerging infectious disease professor at Oxford University who also leads the Recovery trial — which identified the steroid dexamethasone as effective for severely ill hospital patients — said there was "no evidence" that treatments would work less well.

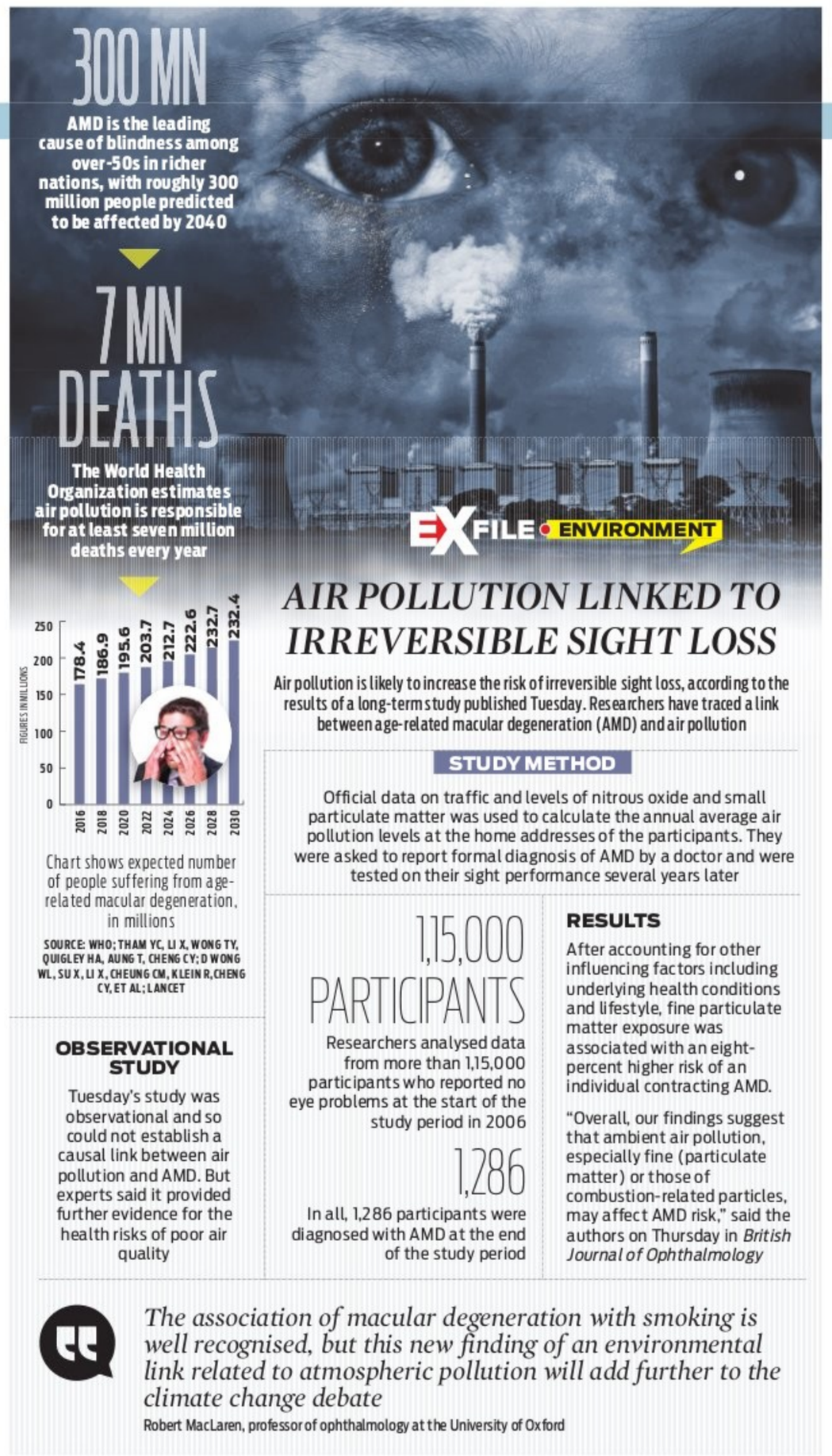
Anti-inflammatories such as dexamethasone "should work equally as well because it's not related to the virus, it is related to the host response", he said.

Horby said overall improvements in therapies and treatments — including things like better strategies for hospital respiratory support — have brought down case fatality rates since the first wave and could even "offset any difference with this new variant".

As for the vaccines, a preliminary study this month from Britain and the Netherlands found the variant would not be able to evade the protective effect of current vaccines.

Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna have also released early research suggesting their vaccines would still be effective against the strain.

Separately, scientists have sought to challenge the common belief that the coronavirus will become get less virulent as it evolves to become more infectious.


300 MN
AMD is the leading cause of blindness among over-50s in richer nations, with roughly 300 million people predicted to be affected by 2040
7 MN DEATHS
The World Health Organization estimates air pollution is responsible for at least seven million deaths every year
EXFILE • ENVIRONMENT
AIR POLLUTION LINKED TO IRREVERSIBLE SIGHT LOSS
Air pollution is likely to increase the risk of irreversible sight loss, according to the results of a long-term study published Tuesday. Researchers have traced a link between age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and air pollution
FIGURES IN MILLIONS
250
200
150
100
50
0
178.4
186.9
195.6
203.7
212.7
222.6
232.7
232.4
2016
2018
2020
2022
2024
2026
2028
2030
Chart shows expected number of people suffering from age-related macular degeneration, in millions
SOURCE: WHO; THAM YC, LI X, WONG TY, QUIGLEY HA, AUNG T, CHENG CY; D WONG WL, SU X, LI X, CHEUNG CM, KLEIN R, CHENG CY, ET AL; LANCET
STUDY METHOD
Official data on traffic and levels of nitrous oxide and small particulate matter was used to calculate the annual average air pollution levels at the home addresses of the participants. They were asked to report formal diagnosis of AMD by a doctor and were tested on their sight performance several years later
1,15,000 PARTICIPANTS
Researchers analysed data from more than 1,15,000 participants who reported no eye problems at the start of the study period in 2006
1,286
In all, 1,286 participants were diagnosed with AMD at the end of the study period
RESULTS
After accounting for other influencing factors including underlying health conditions and lifestyle, fine particulate matter exposure was associated with an eight-percent higher risk of an individual contracting AMD.
"Overall, our findings suggest that ambient air pollution, especially fine (particulate matter) or those of combustion-related particles, may affect AMD risk," said the authors on Thursday in British Journal of Ophthalmology
OBSERVATIONAL STUDY
Tuesday's study was observational and so could not establish a causal link between air pollution and AMD. But experts said it provided further evidence for the health risks of poor air quality
The association of macular degeneration with smoking is well recognised, but this new finding of an environmental link related to atmospheric pollution will add further to the climate change debate
Robert MacLaren, professor of ophthalmology at the University of Oxford

Germany may almost completely halt air travel

HEALTH

BERLIN: Germany is considering almost completely halting flights into the country to slow the spread of more infectious strains of the coronavirus, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said Tuesday.

"The danger from the numerous virus mutations forces us to consider drastic measures," Seehofer told the Bild newspaper.

"That includes significantly stricter border checks, especially at the borders of high-risk areas, but also reducing air travel to Germany to almost zero, as Israel is currently doing," he added.

The emergence of new virus variants in Britain and South Africa, deemed more infectious than the original strain, has fuelled concern at a time when many nations are struggling to rein in the pandemic.

A slower than expected roll-out of vaccines had added to the worries.

Although Germany coped relatively well with the first coronavirus wave last spring, it has been hit hard by a second wave in recent months.

The country renewed restrictions in November, shutting down bars, restaurants, culture and leisure facilities. Measures were tightened further in December, with schools and non-essential shops also ordered to close. The current shutdowns are set to last until mid-February at least. Travellers arriving in Germany from countries where the new variants have been detected are currently required to provide a recent negative test upon arrival, which has led to long queues at the German-Czech border.

FACT OF THE MATTER

J&J trial results next week: CFO

MEDICINE

Johnson & Johnson expects to report results from the eagerly-anticipated clinical trial of its Covid-19 vaccine next week, the US pharmaceutical's chief financial officer told CNBC Tuesday. The company would be expected to apply for an emergency approval for its single-dose shot at the same time, and would likely become the third authorized vaccine in the US soon after that. "We plan to report out by early next week in terms of our results," said Joseph Wolk. He added that the phase 3 study of 45,000 people across 80 countries potentially included cases of new strains identified in South Africa and Brazil. "In terms of supply we're very confident and on track to meet all of our commitments," he added.

Paris-style wildlife pact

BIODIVERSITY

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called on Tuesday for a global agreement on protecting biodiversity with the same scale and ambition as the Paris climate pact. Addressing the World Economic Forum by videolink, von der Leyen said the EU would lobby for such a deal at the COP-15 UN biodiversity summit in Kunming, China expected to take place later this year. The Kunming summit was postponed last year due to Covid-19, and world governments are focused on fighting the outbreak and restarting their economies. But von der Leyen, herself a trained doctor before becoming a politician, said protecting species and habitats could be key to protecting human health.

INQUISITIVE LITTLE LION

A zookeeper feeds Simba, the first lion cub to be born through artificial insemination in Singapore | WILDLIFE RESERVES

UK offers genomics resources to world

TECH

LONDON: Britain will offer its genomics expertise to countries lacking resources to identify new variants of the virus that causes Covid-19, the government announced Tuesday.

"This pandemic has shown that the foundations of so many of the exciting experiences that make life worth living are contingent not just on our health, or the health of our neighbours, but the health of people we've never met," said Health Secretary Matt Hancock. "When one of us suffers, we all suffer. So we must work to promote health security in every single part of the world," he told a virtual meeting of the Chatham House think-tank.

Britain hopes to use its presidency of the G7 this year to push for a "more collaborative and effective global health system" to ensure the international community is better prepared against future threats. Britain will offer resources to help countries analyse new strains through the "New Variant Assessment Platform".

Eli Lilly's treatments reduce Covid deaths

MEDICINE

WASHINGTON: US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly's combination of two synthetic antibodies against Covid-19 reduced hospitalizations and deaths by 70% in high-risk patients with recent positive tests, the company said Tuesday.

"Bamlanivimab and etesevimab together have the potential to be an important treatment that significantly reduces hospitalizations and death in high-risk COVID-19 patients," Lilly's chief scientific officer Daniel Skovronsky said.

The results meant that the phase 3 trial involving 1,035 people achieved its main goal, and the study also met its secondary goals of reducing patients' viral load and their time to recover from the disease. Patients were assigned either a placebo or the combination of bamlanivimab and etesevimab, the two antibodies, at 2.8 grams each.

There were 11 deaths or hospitalizations in the patients who received the therapy, or 2.1% of that group.

In the placebo arm, there were 36 deaths or hospitalizations, or 7.0% of the group.

The therapy thus represented a risk reduction of 70%, and the result was statistically significant, meaning it was unlikely to have occurred by chance.

There were 10 deaths total, all of which occurred in patients taking placebo, and none in the therapy group.

The company said it would continue to study the drug in another trial to examine whether lower doses would yield the same impact.

Monoclonal antibodies are lab-made versions of the body's natural infection-fighting defenses.

Many scientists have welcomed their Covid fighting potential, and both Lilly and biotech firm Regeneron have received emergency use authorizations for their treatments.

But their uptake has been limited in the US by several factors, from a lack of patient interest to not enough staffing and logistical capacity by hospitals to administer them.

Lilly acknowledged some of these difficulties. "Lilly has received feedback from front-line nurses and doctors administering these infusions regarding the complexity and time requirements for preparation and administration."

DATA ROW

AstraZeneca, Germany fight back against reports of minimal vaccine efficacy in elderly

SCIENCE

BERLIN: Germany's health ministry on Tuesday joined AstraZeneca in rubbishing reports quoting unnamed government sources that claimed the British-Swedish company's Covid-19 vaccine showed little efficacy for people above 65.

Handelsblatt economic daily had reported Monday that Berlin had estimated the efficacy of the jab among over-65s was just eight percent, citing unnamed sources.

Separately, Bild daily quoted anonymous sources saying that that Berlin did not expect the vaccine -- developed with Oxford University and set to get the green light from the EU this week -- would receive a licence for use in the elderly. It quoted an efficacy rate of "less than 10 percent".

But Germany's health ministry said Tuesday it "appears that two things have been mixed up in the reports."

"Around eight percent of the volunteers in AstraZeneca's efficacy studies were around 56 and 69 years old and three to four percent are above 70 years old," said the ministry.

"However, this does not mean that it is effective only in eight percent of older people," it added. The health ministry added that European regulator EMA will evaluate the effectiveness of the vaccine.

"It has been known since the autumn that fewer older people were involved in AstraZeneca's first studies than in other manufacturers'," it said.

The company had also rejected the German media reports as erroneous.

"Reports that the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine efficacy is as low as eight percent in adults over 65 years are completely incorrect," the firm said in a statement late Monday.

"In November, we published data in The Lancet demonstrating that older adults showed strong immune responses to the vaccine, with 100 percent of older adults generating spike-specific antibodies after the second dose," it added.

A woman receives a shot of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine in England | AFP

German Health Minister Jens Spahn told public broadcaster ZDF that Berlin would wait to see the complete data from studies of the AstraZeneca vaccine before drawing any conclusions.

On that basis, decisions could be taken next week about "which age groups will be inoculated first with this vaccine".

The European Union issued an angry warning to AstraZeneca Monday over its unexpected delay in delivering millions of doses of its Covid-19 vaccine to the bloc.

Last Friday, the pharma giant said it would not meet its contractual delivery commitments to the European Union because of unexplained "reduced yields" in its European supply chain.

The European Union has currently authorised two vaccines for widespread distribution, manufactured by BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna. It was set to add the AstraZeneca vaccine to that list this week, on the understanding that it would be already on hand.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS City

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27.01.2021
WEDNESDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Ballet revival

On this day in 1895, Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov's revival of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake* premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia

THE LAKE OF THE SWANS

Originally choreographed by Julius Reisinger to the music of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (opus 20), it was first presented as *The Lake of the Swans* for the Imperial Ballet

FAMED WORK

This choreographic notation is housed in the Harvard University Library Theatre Collection and is part of a whole cache of notation known as the Sergeyev Collection, which documents the works of Marius Petipa

INSPIRATION

Throughout the performance history of *Swan Lake*, the 1895 edition has served as the version on which most stagings have been based

Ramesh to work with Sandesh Productions

PG 4

From begging on streets to bagging the Padma Shri, transwoman Jogati Manjamma talks about how her life has been beset with trials and triumphs, big and small

RISING AND SHINING

Ritual dance

In North Karnataka, devotees of Yellavva are known as Yellavva Jogi. Jogati Nritya is a ritual dance performed by Jogati, a community of transgenders. They dedicate their life to goddesses Yellavva and they perform the dance with a basket /pot on the heads.

ASHWINI M SRIPAD

She has been beaten, she has begged on streets, slept on footpaths, and sold idlis for 25 paise. Little did transwoman Jogati Manjamma (63) know then that one day her life would turn around and she would go on to win the Padma Shri award. One of the five recipients from Karnataka this year, Manjamma is a folk artiste who has the distinction of being the first transwoman to head the Karnataka Janapada Academy, a state-government run folk art institution. In addition, her biography *Naduve Suliva Hennu* written by Arun Joladkudligi, a postdoctoral fellow at Kannada University, is also set to release on January 31 at Nayana at Ravindra Kalakshetra.

Sporting a big bindi and a bigger smile, Manjamma takes us to the very beginning of her journey when she started learning the folk dance form Jogati Nritya to earn one square meal. "I had never imagined that I would get this prestigious award which is given to highly accomplished people in their fields. I can't even express my happiness," she tells *CE*. On Monday noon when she received a call from Delhi informing her about the award, she didn't know what to make of it. "They were speaking in Hindi, and I only caught the word 'Padma Shri'. I really thought they were joking," she says sheepishly.

Hailing from Kallukambagraama in Ballari, Manjamma's family moved to Kukwaada village in Davanagere where her father worked in a sugar factory, and she did her schooling. "Though I was born a boy, when I was 16 years old, I realised I was behaving like a girl. That's when my hard days started. I was beaten by family members, and was taken to astrologers and doctors. They even stopped talking to me and I felt helpless," Manjamma recalls. Unable to bear this humiliation, Manjamma stole some money from her mother and ran away from home.

Manjamma went to Mariyammanahalli in Hospet where she learnt folk art form Chowdaki Pada. She moved to Chikkanahalli in the '80s where she started selling idlis. For additional income, Manjamma, who has passed Class 10, started taking tuitions for ₹5 per month.

It was during this time that Manjamma met Kalavva Jogati, a Jogati Nritya performer, from whom she picked up the art form. Manjamma later joined a women's theatre group where she started playing male characters like Bhasmasura, Keechaka and Tarakasura. "Since I am well-built, I was usually asked to play male roles," she says nonchalantly.

However, Manjamma feels sad for the hundreds of Jogatis, especially from north Karnataka, who continue to face hardships. She says, "To this day, they are facing the same difficulties that I did. They have neither Aadhaar nor BPL cards and don't get any benefits. I request the government to allow those under the age of 30 to continue their education, while those over 30 should be helped with jobs. In Karnataka, there are hundreds of watchmen who are from outside Karnataka. Why cannot we get such jobs? Don't we also have the right to live a life with dignity?"

Since I am dark skinned, I would put on makeup to feel beautiful. Performing this folk dance gave me a lot of satisfaction. Kalavva used to manage the shows. After her death I took charge, and have taught thousands of people from across the country

Jogati Manjamma , folk artiste

KNOW YOUR CITY

Arun Prasad, city-based history researcher, unravels interesting facts about Bengaluru in this weekly quiz series. So it's time for you to find out how familiar you are with the city, beyond its heritage buildings, IT parks and the pub culture.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Know Your City Quiz'**

Correct answers and names of first three respondents with right answers will be featured in CE on Thursday.

QUESTIONS

1. A museum dedicated to Kempegowda, the founder of Bengaluru, was established in the year 2011. Which iconic heritage building on MG Road houses the Kempegowda museum?
2. Name the heritage five-star hotel in Bengaluru started by a British woman named Mrs. Bronson as a boarding house with just 10 beds way back in 1887.
3. Name the world famous Bangalurean known as 'Human Computer' for her remarkable mathematical ability in numerical calculations. She went on to earn a place in the Guinness Book of World Records in 1982.

Red hot

If you want to perfect the art of wearing lipstick the right way, then head straight to actor Shubra Aiyappa's Insta page. Taking to Instagram, she shared a video with the caption, "I have decided on Red for Sunday!"

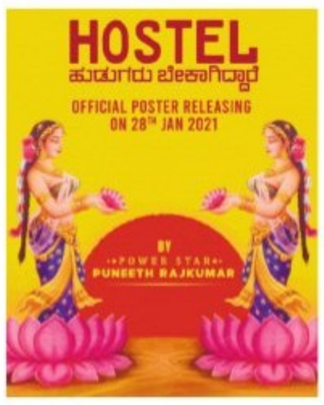
Raja Ravi Varma's art works take centre stage in this film's promo which has caught the fancy of Sandalwood movie buffs

PAINTING A NEW PICTURE

A concept promo from the film *Hostel Hudugaru Bekagiddare*

A SHARADHAA

Even as the Sandalwood folk and fans prepare for the release of the official poster of upcoming film *Hostel Hudugaru Bekagiddare* on Jan. 28, this youthful film seems to have already sparked interest with just its title and tag line – 'Worst movie ever made in the history of cinema'. While the poster will be launched by Power Star Puneeth Rajkumar, the film's promo has been grabbing eyeballs. We'll tell you why.



Following an artistic approach by debutant director Nithin Krishnamurthy, the team has made use of paintings created by Raja Ravi Varma to do the talking. It begins with "*Re Vishalu, eneri adige nimmanaeli?* (Vishalu, what's cooking for lunch today?) with the highlight being '*Re Mona*', (referring to Monalisa's painting). The young team has played on the age-old concept of 'Neighbourhood talk' (read small talk). This gives a hint of the film's genre.

Nithin Krishnamurthy

Nithin says that the team was influenced by European memes, which was the trigger of the idea. "Since ours is a Kannada film, we wanted to keep it local. So we chose paintings which are over 60 years old and those which did not have copyright issues. We had a few middle-aged women who dubbed their voices for the promo," says Nithin about the promo that was released a couple of days ago and has been receiving a lot of appreciation on social media, and also had words of praise from actor-director Rakshit Shetty and Rishab Shetty. "We were hesitant whether using these artistic paintings will offend anybody. Thankfully we are getting only positive response," he says.

The film, made under Gulmohar films in association with Varrun Studios, has Arvind Kashyap and Ajaneesh Lokanth handling cinematography and music, respectively. Nithin says that *Hostel Hudugaru Bekagiddare* is a pop culture comedy-drama, and the entire film takes place in one night at a hostel. This is a realistic film with no filters, and is shot in a cinema verite style, a first attempt in Kannada cinema, he tells us.

About 30 fresh faces will be introduced in the film, for which Nithin auditioned at least 7,000 artistes. "We were keen to have fresh actors. The audition was a long process. Finally, we got on board the 30 best," says Nithin, adding, "We have two female leads who will be seen in pivotal roles."

Nithin has previously worked in a private entertainment channel, where he was in charge of promos and ads. Having worked as an assistant director in Pawan Kumar's *Lucia*, *Hostelge Hudugaru* will mark his directorial debut.

CITY READ

Hospital honours motorcyclist

On Republic Day, Manipal Hospitals honoured B'luru-based Pooja Bajaj, a motorcyclist and entrepreneur who bounced back after a surgery at Manipal Hospitals, Old Airport Road. Bajaj was back on her bike within 26 days after an accident that crushed her collar bone. Multiple titanium plates, bolts and screws cover 85 per cent of her right shoulder. Dr Manish Rai, hospital director, said, "This year's Republic Day celebrations has a completely different sentiment. With the outbreak of the pandemic, it left the country rattled and hesitant to even dream of a Republic Day celebration. With the vaccine roll out, we are delighted to celebrate our nation's progress."

Celebrating artisans and art

The India Handmade Collective in association with Mission Samriddhi, a social impact enterprise, is hosting its first physical exhibition at Bangalore International Centre between Jan. 29 and 31 to coincide with Gandhi's death anniversary. The exhibition, S.A.L.T (Sustain-Act-Live-Transform) displays many native brands with their products that celebrate the artisans whose handmade creations form a compelling narrative. This is paired with food and entertainment. This initiative aims to encourage indigenous weavers, spinners, and ethical small textile producers to continue their work in this space and make their ends meet sustainably, by giving their business a boost.

Pics: Shriram BN

There was no stopping Bengalureans from turning up in their finest at the derby

Riding high on summer look

MONIKA MONALISA

A dash of fashion and a high dose of excitement... This was the scene at Kingfisher Ultra Derby Bangalore at The Bangalore Turf Club on Tuesday. Although the event usually brings together the who's who of the city, the winter session this time saw a lukewarm response, perhaps due to the ongoing pandemic.

While hats and dresses were on point, comfort surely triumphed over all else. Whites, florals, and subdued colours took centre stage with many women dressed to beat the heat. Designer Aviva Bidapa turned up in a strappy floral asymmetrical dress. "It's quite warm today, and I wanted to wear something breathable and feel free while watching handsome horses on the track," said Bidapa, playfully adding that she is a keen viewer of races although refrains from betting.

Actor Pooja Bhamrrah also kept it casual by pairing a mustard-coloured linen co-ord suit with sneakers. "I know the derby is usually associated with hats and dresses but with the mask, I wanted to wear something comfortable and light. I love to walk on the grass to pet the horses, that's why I chose sneakers over heels," she laughed. Model Sanjna Mallappa kept it classic yet chic with her ruffled pink and white Coco Chanel dress, pearl belt and pink bandana. "I dressed according to the mood. Since it's warm, I kept it light but classy," she said.

The cancellation of the traditional fashion show and the best dressed award brought in some disappointment, but that failed to bring down the fashion quotient. For fashion designer and racer Anitha Kholay, the highlight was getting a chance to get dressed. "We always find a way to catch up with friends, but we hardly get a chance to pull out our best wear these days. Months of preparation go in to ensure our hats match with dresses," she said.

Deena Pinto

Pooja Bhamrrah

Aviva Bidapa

TRACK RECORD

Kingfisher Ultra Derby Bangalore 2400M: Lagarde (Ram Seshu Ayyuni) 58 Akshay Kumar 1, Sovereign Legend 58 Sandesh 2, Forest Flame 56.5 Trevor 3, Antibes 56.5 John 4. All Ran. 1-1/2l, Shd, 2-1/4l. T: 2.32.21. **Tote:** ₹39 (W). 15, 27, 13 (P). Fc: ₹794. Q: ₹334. Shp: ₹ 74. **Thp:** ₹49. Trinalla: ₹1,218 & 462. **Exacta:** ₹ 6,276 & 3,867. **Fav:** Forest Flame (Suleiman Attaollahi)

JACKPOT: ₹1,64,586 (c/o). Runner-Up: ₹14,107 | **FIRST TREBLE:** ₹7,155 (c/o) | **SECOND TREBLE:** ₹585

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

ADDING A CHARM

This Valentine's Day, shower your loved ones with affection by giving a personalised touch to your gift with the Jibbitz charms collection from Crocs. You can personalise your favourite pair of Classic clogs with Jibbitz charms. The Classic Clogs are priced from ₹2,495 onwards and Jibbitz charms start at ₹199. **Shop the collection** at www.shopcrocs.in or at Croc stores.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Lazy Suzy now has a weekend special menu every two weeks. The menu includes Mexican Egg Rancheros, cucumber, cream cheese and rucola on sunflower seed rye bagel, wild mushroom risotto and more. **Where:** Lazy Suzy, Indiranagar **When:** Every Sunday

ONLINE BOOK FAIR

Bookchor, an online bookstore for pre-owned books presents 'Lock The Box - Online', a virtual book fair that allows buyers to fit as many books as they can into a box of their choice and make a one time payment for the same. **Where:** Jan. 29- Feb. 7 **Details:** Lock The Box app

LIVE MUSIC

The trio music band, Men in Blakc, known for their unique jazzy instrumentals, will perform a mix of Indi-pop, Bollywood and Hollywood chartbusters. **When:** Jan. 30, 7pm to 10pm **Where:** The Quad by BLR, Opposite Arrivals, BLR Airport

Check out this STREET FOOD FESTIVAL. The menu will offer dishes from Lucknow, Delhi and Punjab. All through Jan, at Hard Rock Cafe, St Marks Road and Whitefield

Staycation ready

Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa has introduced staycation packages. Slip into a surrounding of serene views and relaxing indulgences at this picturesque beach resort in Chennai. Whether you are visiting with family, friends or a romantic partner, the hotel has planned the perfect stay packages for every guest. **For details, visit:** www.marriott.com, or call: 71006000

From Goa with love

Try out this Goan Food Festival where you can indulge in favourite Goan starters and mains, accompanied by Poee, the famous bread, and topped off with exquisite desserts like Caramel pudding and Bebinca. Prices start from ₹275 ++ **Where:** Biergarten by Peep Kitchen, Hoodi **When:** Feb. 1 to 28, 12 noon to 1 am **Call:** 080 47096232

Yummy in the tummy

Making your Sunday yummy with the Dineout SteppinOut Food Festival. From ooey gooey brownies to smokin' hot kebabs and creamy pastas, there is something for every taste preference. **Where:** UB City **When:** Jan 31, noon onwards

Musical notes

Watch the 174th Vaidika Aradhana of Saint Thyagaraja, being held for the second time in Bengaluru. **Where:** Sringeri Shankara Matha, Shankapuram **When:** January 29 to Tuesday, February 2

Sufi meets South

An evening of Sufi music and South Indian cuisine will be presented at The Sound Bites Cafe at The Indian Music Experience (IME) founded by The Brigade Group. Intakhab, a Sufi band, will enthrall the audience with their style of music. Where: JP Nagar When: January 30, 7-10 pm Call: +91 9686602366

Show time

Head to Magnitude Gallery to catch 'Rustic Hues', painting that capture rural scenes. **When:** All through Jan. **Where:** No. 140/13, 27th cross, 3rd Block, Jayanagar

QUICK FIX

What's cooking

IN YOUR KITCHEN?
We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at cityexpresschn@gmail.com.

WHEAT PANCAKES

INGREDIENTS

- **Whole wheat flour:** 1 cup
- **Milk:** 1 cup
- **Eggs:** 3
- **Honey:** 1 tsp
- **Baking soda:** 1 tsp
- **Salt:** 1/4 tsp
- **Baking powder:** 2 tsp
- **Vegetable oil:** 1/4 oil

METHOD

- Blend wheat and milk in a blender for five minutes.
- Add remaining ingredients and blend till you get a smooth mix.
- Put the mix on a hot girdle and cook till golden brown.

— **Pavani Reddy, Hyderabad**

SOUND BOARD

THINK FAST, TALK SMART

Communication is critical to success in business and in life. Join Matt Abrahams, a lecturer of Strategic Communication at Stanford Graduate School of Business, as he sits down with experts in the field to discuss real-world challenges.
- On Apple Podcasts

START-UP STORIES

Jonathan Moules talks to entrepreneurs about building successful brands, giving birth during a funding round, and rebuilding a reputation in the wake of bankruptcy. Real stories from those who've done it, from idea to exit.
- On Spotify

THE LIVELY PODCAST: NO MAKEUP NEEDED

This is a show for women with wild hearts and boss brains, interested in keeping it real about what it means to build a business, lean into the community, juggle it all, and make a solid impact along the way.
- On Apple Podcasts

SHE SAYS SHE'S FINE

She Says She's Fine is a women's health podcast hosted by popular gynaecologist, Dr. Munjaal Kapadia, whose mission is to bust the shackles around the patient-doctor hierarchy, and create a friendly, warm environment for his patients to be treated.
- On Stitcher

REVISIONIST HISTORY

Revisionist History is Malcolm Gladwell's journey through the overlooked and the misunderstood. Every episode re-examines something from the past—an event, a person, an idea, even a song—and asks whether we got it right the first time.
- On Spotify

POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

KHUSHI KHUSHIYAGI

Raj, who belongs to an affluent family, meets Priya at an event and is spellbound by her beauty. He loses her number, which leads to a string of confusions.
- Cast: Ganesh, Amulya, Nandini Rai

MR AIRAVATA

Airavata, a farmer who was wronged by a few corrupt police officers, decides to take matters into his own hands and joins the police force through wrong means.
- Cast: Darshan, Urvashi Rautela, Prakash Raj

JAANU

Siddarth helps Rukmini reach home when she runs out of money on a trip. Rukmini's family attack Siddarth, but welcome him after learning the truth. Both fall in love, but a surprise awaits them.
- Cast: Yash, Deepa Sannidhi, Rangayana Raghu

SAATTAI

Dayalan, a teacher, tries to change the ongoing malpractices in a government school. Unfortunately, his acts are not welcomed by a few senior members and students, which leads to a rift between them.
- Cast: Pandi, Mahima Nambiar, Swasika, Thambi Ramaiah

Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

WHAT'S ON TED TALKS

1 FUTURE TECH WILL GIVE YOU THE BENEFITS OF CITY LIFE ANYWHERE BY JULIO GIL

Urbanisation is reaching the end of its cycle, says logistics expert Julio Gil, and soon more people will be choosing to live (and work) in the countryside, thanks to rapid advances in augmented reality, autonomous delivery, off-the-grid energy and other technologies.

2 WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU DIDNT' DRINK WATER BY MIA NACAMULLI

Water is essentially everywhere in our world, and the average human is composed of between 55 and 60% water. So what role does water play in our bodies, and how much do we actually need to drink to stay healthy? Mia Nacamulli details the health benefits of hydration.

3 THE LIE THAT INVENTED RACISM BY JOHN BIEWEN

To understand and eradicate racist thinking, start at the beginning. That's what journalist and documentarian John Biewen did, leading to a trove of surprising and thought-provoking information on the "origins" of race. He shares his findings.

4 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MEETS SCIENCE TO TAKE ON CLIMATE CHANGE BY HINDOU OUMAROU IBRAHIM

To tackle a problem as large as climate change, we need both science and Indigenous wisdom, says environmental activist Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim. She shares how her nomadic community in Chad is working closely with scientists to restore endangered ecosystems.

5 THE PROFOUND POWER OF AN AUTHENTIC APOLOGY BY EVE ENSLER

Genuine apology goes beyond remorse, says playwright Eve Ensler. She shares how she transformed her own experience of abuse into wisdom on what wrongdoers can do and say to truly repent — and offers a four-step roadmap to help begin the process. (Contains mature content.)

FIT BIT

TITTIBHASANA B

(FIREFLY POSE)

In Sanskrit, 'tittibha' means 'fly' or 'insect' and asana means 'pose'. It is an arm balancing asana that demands strength and perseverance. It is an advanced pose, which is a variation of the base Firefly pose, both of which are deep hip opener poses. In the base of an advanced arm balance pose the hips and legs are in a similar position. It is a standing forward fold, the most unique and crucial aspect is the bind behind the back, which forces the hip to open deeper than the base pose by pushing the head and torso inside the legs. Both of these Firefly poses are a part of the Ashtanga Second or Intermediate Series.

STEPS

- Stand on the mat and spread your legs shoulder distance apart.
- Inhale, lift the hands and stretch your spine.
- Exhale, fold forward from your waist and place your palms on the floor in front of the corresponding feet.
- While inhaling, extend your spine and look up.
- During exhale, place the palms behind the heels and slightly bend your knees, bringing your shoulders underneath it.
- Now, inhale, roll up your hands behind and interlock your fingers near the lower back.
- Exhale, straighten the knees with palms bound behind.
- Stay in this position for 10-15 seconds or as long as you are comfortable.
- Inhale, slowly release your palms and lift your torso up to standing position.
- You may keep your hands behind the lower back and bend forward as much as you can.

BENEFITS

- Tones the entire body due to the deep extension of hips, arms, shoulders, legs, glutes, back and neck.
- Improves focus by keeping the mind free of thoughts. Allows to bring balance in the mind, with time.
- The deeper the breathing, the lungs work efficiently getting more oxygen, thereby reducing the stress levels in the body.
- Though it is an advanced pose, with time these muscles get supple and help to keep stiffness and tightness away.
- Stimulates the abdominal organs resulting in stronger digestion and toned belly.
- This pose clears any physical blockages and also increases the flow of prana or the vital energy in the body. It is more beneficial for concentration.
- Releases tension and stress from the body.
- Activates Manipura (Solar Plexus) Chakra.

LIMITATIONS

- People who have had shoulder, wrist, elbow and low back injuries, hernia or recent abdominal surgery, should avoid this pose.

— by N Elumalai, PhD scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

NOW STREAMING

REGIONAL

AVANE SRIMANNARAYANA (Kannada)

In pursuit of solving a long-held mystery of Amaravati, Narayana – the quirky new cop in the town – has to get past a dreaded clan of dacoits and its fierce leader Jairam.
- Cast: Rakshit Shetty, Shanvi Srivastava, Achyuth Kumar
- Watch on: Amazon Prime

JOSEPH (Malayalam)

Following the death of his ex-wife, a retired police officer, who is known for his investigative prowess, unexpectedly gets pulled into a criminal case involving organ harvesting.
- Cast: Joju George, Athmeeya Rajan, Dileesh Pothan, Madhuri Braganza
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

WEEKEND (Kannada)

Set in the modern world, the story revolves around techies with employment and ones without. Among these two groups, a techie Ajay who is raised masterfully good by his grandfather Anant Ram, will be leading a happy life. But on a particular weekend a certain mysterious things starts to unfold around these two which will change their lives and others lives too.
- Cast: Milind, Sanjana Burli, Anant Nag
- Watch on: Amazon Prime

KOLAMAAVU KOKILA (Tamil)

Kokila, who has financial issues, gets involved in a drug racket to earn quick money. Eventually, her family also gets dragged in the internal drug war which, in turn, puts their lives at risk.
- Cast: Nayanthra, Yogi Babu, Saranya Ponvannan, Rajendran
- Watch on: Zee5

VIRUMANDI (Tamil)

A reporter researching the death penalty meets Virumandi and Kothala. While listening to their versions of the same story, she realises that Virumandi is being punished for a crime he did not commit.
- Cast: Kamal Haasan, Rohini, Abhirami, Pasupathi
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with Internet connection.

NENU C/O NUVVU (Telugu)

Vinay lives in a joint family, comprising mostly women. The girl who marries Vinay must charm the women to become an integral part of the household
- Cast: Dhanraj, Ratna Kishore, Saga Reddy
- Watch on: Zee5

TANDAV (Hindi, series)

In New Delhi, a dark story about Indian politics and ambition unfolds behind closed doors and in corridors of power.
- Cast: Saif Ali Khan, Krithika Kamra, Gauhar Khan, Sunil Grover, Sarah-Jane Dias
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

ENGLISH

HOME FRONT

After failing a mission, a DEA agent decides to go to a small town with his nine-year-old daughter to live a peaceful life. However, things do not go as planned when he crosses paths with a drug lord.
- Cast: Jason Statham, Kate Bosworth, James Franco, Winnona Ryder
- Watch on: Amazon Prime Video

LAWLESS ISLAND (series)

Away from the humdrum of civilisation, a small group of individuals venture into a foggy future in Alaska. Bereft of modern conveniences, they learn to rely on the land, the sea and each other.
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

THE ART OF RACING IN THE RAIN

Enzo, a golden retriever, learns that the methods used on the race track by his owner, a Formula One driver, can also be used to navigate through life.
- Cast: Milo Ventimiglia, Amanda Seyfried, Kevin Costner, Martin Donovan
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

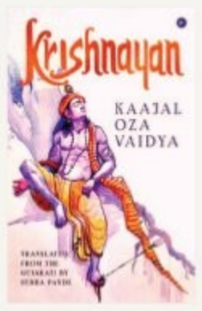
WANDA VISION

Living idealised suburban lives, super-powered beings Wanda and Vision begin to suspect that everything is not as it seems.
- Cast: Elizabeth Olsen, Evan Peters, Paul Bettany, Kat Dennings
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

SUBSCRIPTION

Zee 5: ₹ 99 per month
Prime Video: ₹ 129 per month
Disney+Hotstar: ₹ 399 per year

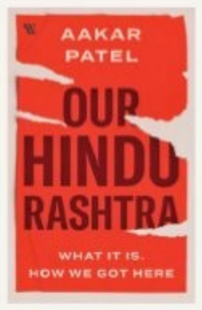
BOOK SHELF



KRISHNAYAN

Author: KAAJAL OZA VAIDYA
Translator: Subha Pande
No of pages: 120 pages

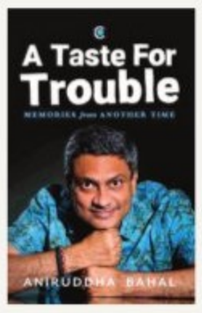
Gandhari's curse has come true. Near the confluence of the Saraswati, Kapila and Hiranya rivers, Krishna lies under an Aswattha tree, fatally wounded by Jara's arrow. In his final moments, he reminisces his time in the mortal world, and the women in his life appear before him. The erudite royal consort Rukmini, the most precious of his 16,008 wives, asks him why he is embarking upon moksha alone when she was a fellow traveller on his journeys. Satyabhama, who came into his life carrying the Syamantak diamond in her trousseau, and dazzled him with her beauty and charm, grapples with the meaning of their marriage. The book is stitched together with what these four extraordinary women meant to Krishna, is at once vivid and intense and also tender, but not for a moment weighed down by sentimentality.



OUR HINDU RASHTRA

Author: AAKAR PATEL
No of pages: 368 pages

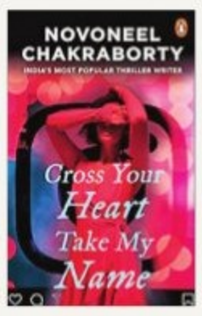
India has taken so sharp a turn in recent years that the very centre has shifted considerably. Is there a way back to the just, secular, inclusive vision of our Constitution-makers? This country has long been an outlier in its South Asian neighbourhood, with its inclusive Constitution and functioning democracy. The growth of Hindutva, in some sense, brings India in line with the other polities here. Writer Aakar Patel peels back layer after layer of cause and effect through independent India's history to understand how Hindutva came to gain such a hold on the country. He examines what it means for India that its laws and judiciary have been permeated by prejudice and bigotry, what the breach of fundamental rights portends in these circumstances, and what the all-round institutional collapse signifies for the future.



A TASTE FOR TROUBLE

Author: ANIRUDDHA BAHAL
No of pages: 266 pages

ANIRUDDHA BAHAL has spelt trouble for the establishment for as long as he can even remember. As a boy of fifteen, he ran away from home, returning a week later, penniless, but with valuable lessons learnt. As a journalist, he transformed the boundaries of reporting with the risks he took. And he paid the price for it. As a writer, his first novel won him international recognition—as well as the Bad Sex in Fiction Award, handed to him by no less a personage than Sting. As an entrepreneur, he went against the grain in setting up an investigative news portal at a time when speaking truth to power was no longer on the agenda of media houses. What does such a man see and remember when he looks back? *A Taste For Trouble* brings together those that continue to keep him anchored in the present and hopeful about the future.



CROSS YOUR HEART, TAKE MY NAME

Author: Novoneel Chakraborty
No of pages: 197 pages

Garv Roy Gill and Yahvi Kothari meet at an airport lounge. Six months later they find themselves consumed by the proverbial once-in-a-lifetime kind of love. Bored with their mundane daily routine, their adventurous streak makes them decide, one day, to escape the present and begin a new reality somewhere far, far away. Just that the day they are supposed to meet and escape, Yahvi doesn't turn up. Then she doesn't respond to Garv's phone calls or messages. And mysteriously Yahvi vanishes altogether. Days later, as a grieving Garv stumbles upon her Instagram profile, which he didn't know existed, he is shocked to realise that her every post is probably a clue to the truth behind her disappearance. *Cross Your Heart, Take My Name* is a beguiling tale about urban loneliness, fickle relationships.

SERVING ACES

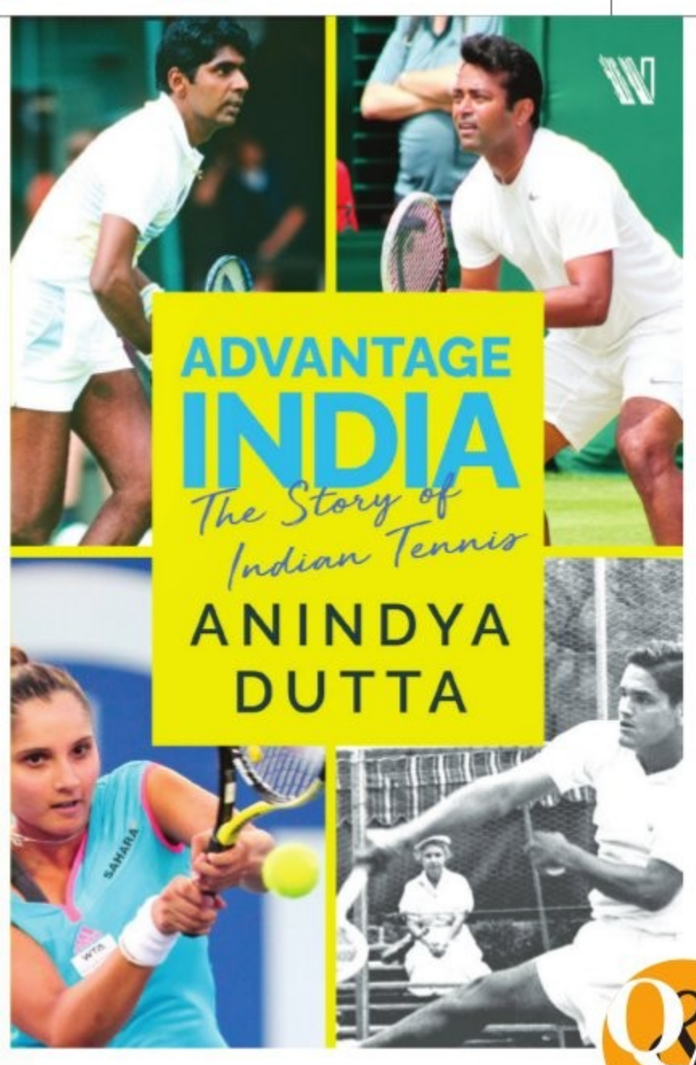
Author Anindya Dutta talks to *CE* about why he decided to write on the history of Indian tennis, and how this book was the most difficult one to research among the six he has written on sports history

MONIKA MONALISA

ONCE established in England, tennis caught the attention of colonised countries, including India. Anindya Dutta's latest book *Advantage India: The Story of Indian tennis* (₹599, Westland Sport), gives many such details about the sport and its evolution in India. The banker-turned-writer, who is obsessed with cricket, decided to turn his sixth book towards tennis. **Excerpts from an interview:**

Your books have largely been about cricket. What made you write about tennis this time?
I saw my first Test match when I was 7, and the first Davis Cup tie when I was 12. Since then the two sports have held a special place in my heart. While Indian cricket is rich in literature, the history of Indian tennis has largely been ignored. I felt it was time this was corrected and the rich legacy of the sport in India revealed to a generation that is searching for tennis heroes.

The subject is quite extensive, how did you go about the research for the book?
It was by far the most difficult book to research among the six I have written on sports history. Stories of remarkable men and women who influenced not only Indian tennis but history of our nation, had all but disappeared. I went deep into archives in India and abroad, obtained rare and out-of-print books detailing lives of some of the players of the early 20th century, and did extensive interviews with the oldest surviving players to gain insights into their careers and their predecessors and compatriots. I then built the story brick by brick since its beginnings in the late 19th century, not long after the first Wimbledon Championships had been played. A fascinating tale that emerged was that Sydney Jacob, one of the early greats of Indian tennis, was to a great degree responsible for the eventual punishment that was meted out to Brigadier Dyer for the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre.



Q&A

Which era of tennis in India do you think is the golden era?
As far as singles goes, it has to be the era that culminated with Krishnan reaching two Wimbledon semi-finals and World No. 3 in singles ranking, and Vijay Amritraj who achieved a lot but did not quite deliver all that he promised. Krishnan's period had some remarkable players like Jaidip Mukherjea, Premjit Lall, and before them Sumant Misra and Naresh Kumar. The second golden age was the age of Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi and the emergence of Sania Mirza.

What do you make of the current and upcoming players?
Prajnesh, Ramkumar and Sumit Nagal appear to be our best bets at the moment. It will take quite an effort for them to reach the levels that Vijay and Ramesh Krishnan got to, because tennis has changed, the resources needed have multiplied. The players need help from the Association and from corporate sponsors who are not really coming forward with the kind of backing needed.

Why haven't we seen any women pros in the grand slam tours after Sania Mirza?
We have to recognise that Sania is an extraordinary player who emerged from an environment that had never produced a talent like her. She rose to World No. 27 in singles and the best result before her was a second round appearance at the Australian Open. She then became a multiple Grand Slam events winner. It will be some time before we see another Sania.

When the going gets tough

In the isolation ward, my mother was being the strong woman I had always known her to be as she didn't show even an iota of fear. I, defying the anxiety of it all, pretended to be in control. Testing positive for Covid-19 gave rise to many other distressing concerns, and it could get exhausting and frustrating to keep it together and be strong for one another. It's like a mask of strength that is too heavy to wear. I personally believe that talking about your fears help cope with them as, in so doing, the fear loses its power over you. But keeping up with the mask of strength, in a bid to silence the fear within, how does one then deal with the chaos in the mind? How does one silence the deafening noise of fear tearing into every part of your conscious and subconscious being?

Even with my brother, Raju, being an actor himself, and I being Anupam Kher, blessed with countless support and luxury of knowing the right people, it wasn't easy. I couldn't help but think of the countless faceless people who were struggling, and where the need to step out to put bread on the table and support the family was not something they could afford. They did not have the luxury of taking it slow. A constant battle between your safety and of those you love and keeping the household running and not falling prey to the evils of everyday survival was something not everyone went through. And my heart went out to those who had to suffer due to lack of proper means.

There is another side that comes into play at difficult times like this one. The compassion, empathy, and pure kindness of the people that surround us can do wonders for our mental well-being. I thanked each doctor and staff member at Kokilaben Hospital for their relentless support and more-than-kind ways. Dr Singhania was always in touch with me. His calm and positive attitude had an unexplainable way of keeping my worries at bay. We condition ourselves to think and believe that doctors have everything in control and their personal lives are a far cry from any adversities. But they, just like all of us, are fighting battles of their own. I learnt about Dr Singhania's father having suffered a severe heart attack and going through surgery. But not once did he show it on his face. it was then that I began to understand the mask of strength even more. I asked him about his father's health each day, knowing that a genuine word of care and concern goes a long way.

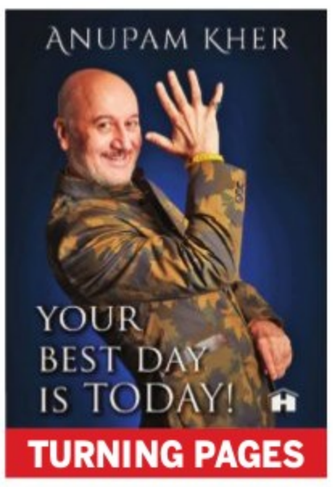
Anil Ambani's personal involvement in my mother's treatment and his heartfelt statement to Dr Shetty of how my mother was his mother as well, will forever and always be engraved in my heart and mind. Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, on learning of my mother's health, called me each day to enquire about her and my family. He asked me to share Dr Singhania's number with him. Before calling me, he used to take a complete understanding of the treatment and prognosis from Dr Singhania and then took out the time to explain, in detail, the progress and way forward to me.

During such times, when you are fighting to stay positive, to look for some normalcy and a ray of hope, any helping hand adds light to the darkness that surrounds you. A call or even a word of encouragement is uplifting.

The doctors started my mother on a few steroids to help her appetite and aid her recovery. My conversations with her during that time show that the treatment was working as her voice had the upbeat tone to it again—the familiarity of 'Dulari Rocks' that is synonymous with the fighter spirit . . . the optimism and wit that not only inspires this household but the thousands of other grandmothers, mothers, and children who watch her videos. When my family was tested positive and had to self-isolate, I was coordinating with the house chef so that I could make nutritious food available to my brother and his family. It wasn't an easy task, but it made me appreciate the expertise of homemakers.

Finally, after 10 days of extreme pressure and struggle, the doctors informed me that I could take my mother home. Needless to say, this was a challenging time for me and my family, and my perspective to this virus changed completely. But it also taught me the value of staying calm and the magic of compassion and love during adversity.

(Extract from Anupam Kher's Your best day is today, *with permission from Hay House India)*



TURNING PAGES

NUGGETS

Now, 'book'ed

For those who found Vikram Sampath's book *Savarkar* interesting, there's more to look forward to. The writer and historian has completed the manuscript of volume 2, which he has submitted to his publishers, Penguin India. "And it's FINALLY a wrap! Years of research and the last several months of intense & isolated writing...the manuscript of Volume 2 of *Savarkar* finally submitted to my publishers. With copy edits et al to follow the book should be out in a few months!," he wrote on social media.

URBAN BOURBON
Hriday Ranjan
Writer, comedian

The right to laugh and be laughed at

For much of my childhood, Republic Day was just another holiday. It came a week after the Sankranti celebrations waned off. We sang the national anthem at school, and were given a laddoo and samosa for our trouble. In the evenings, Doordarshan would choose to play a patriotic film, and we would go to bed dreading going back to classes the next day.

It was only later that I realised the true worth of Republic Day. Even though the word 'Republic Day' sounds like it was named after a popular noisy TV channel, it is actually the day when the Indian Constitution came into effect in the year 1950. As a writer and standup comedian, I wish to propose a new subpoint to our fundamental rights – the Right to Laugh and Be Laughed At. A fundamental right that allows us to laugh at ourselves, our culture, our tradition, our beliefs, and our gods.

In India, cracking a religious joke could mean a jail term. But if God is almighty and omnipresent, why would he/she/it be offended by a joke? If god created us all, and nurtures us every day – why would he/she/it want us not to poke fun at him? Our parents do not mind when we take jabs at them – why would god – the most compassionate one in the universe – take offence? And if god is not offended, why do god's followers create a ruckus when they hear a religious joke? Surely god has other issues at hand – global warming, climate change, and all the terror unleashed in his name?

The last five years have been nerve-wracking for standup comedians, whether it was TV comedians like Kiku Sharda, or standup comedians like Kunal Kamra getting slapped with a contempt of court notice for a tweet. Amidst the cacophony that is our national news, standup comedian Munawar Farooqui has been languishing in judicial custody even though there is no concrete evidence against him. All this while 40 per cent of our parliamentarians are accused of crimes like rape and murder.

While a comedian usually is worried about premises and punchlines, Indian standup comedians are concerned about getting an actual punch to their jawlines. And it isn't merely the central government that seems to have lost its sense of humour. States like Maharashtra have jailed youngsters for their social media posts. West Bengal and UP have followed suit, and Bihar last week announced a ruling where social media posts could lead to seven years of jail, a fine, or both. This only goes to show that our political parties might be divided by ideologies, but are united by their repulsion to jokes and comedy.

But this begs the question – what is the point of a democracy if one isn't able to poke fun at a nation's politicians? Donald Trump's stint as the POTUS witnessed the careers of standup comedians soar through the roof. Volodymyr Zelensky – the current President of the Ukraine was once a producer and comedian – even having played the President of Ukraine in a comedy show.

But in India, one has to self-censor before speaking of politicians. It is considered taboo to make fun of politicians, even while our honourable prime minister tweets about the need for humour in a thriving democracy. As a firm believer in the Constitution, I humbly submit a proposal. We need a fundamental Right to Laugh and be Laughed at. After all, aren't we all electing clowns once in five years?

PS: Kindly do not arrest me for this column!

(The author's views are his own)

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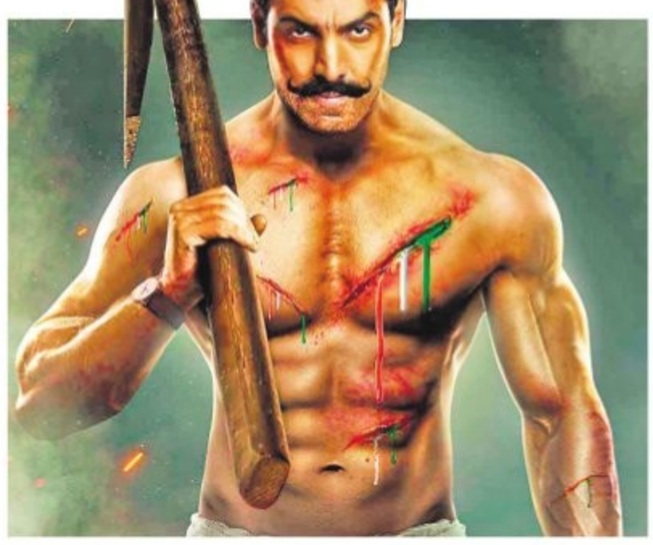


John Abraham's *Satyameva Jayate 2* to hit the screens this Eid

CE FEATURES

John Abraham, on Tuesday, announced that his film *Satyameva Jayate 2* will be hitting theatres countrywide on May 14.

Produced by Bhushan Kumar's T-Series and Emmay Entertainment, the Milap Zaveri-directed film is a sequel to the 2018 hit and also features Divya Khosla Kumar.

Abraham shared the news of the film's release date on social media as he celebrated the country's 72nd Republic Day.

"Tann Mann Dhann, se Badhkar Jann Gann Mann! The team of *#SatyamevaJayate2* wishes everyone a Happy Republic Day! See you in cinemas this EID on 14th May 2021," Abraham captioned the photo, which he shared on his Twitter and Instagram account.

Satyameva Jayate2 is a departure from its original Mumbai setting and will see Abraham fighting corruption in Lucknow. Last week, Salman Khan had said his much-awaited film, *Radhe - Your Most Wanted Bhai* will arrive in theatres on May 13 this year coinciding with Eid.

Directed by Prabhudheva, the action drama was scheduled to hit screens during Eid on May 22, 2020 but was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Ramesh Aravind to collaborate with Sandesh Productions for a film

The actor is in talks with the production house, even as he looks forward to begin shooting for *Shivaji Surathkal* sequel

Sandesh Nagaraj

His agenda is to get more on the creative side and design the whole film while he introduces some young and talented filmmakers from his team to direct a film. The first attempt will be made with the film produced by Sandesh Nagaraj

A SHARADHAA

RAMESH Aravind is back at work after a brief hiatus, and is getting associated with Sandesh Productions for his latest venture. The actor-director, who took a break for the wedding for his daughter, Niharika has now returned to what he likes doing best. The *Shivaji Surathkal* actor is said to have had a few rounds of discussion with the producers, and is likely to finalise the project in the next few days, after which an official announcement will be made by the team.

The actor and the producer have known each other for years now, and have come together for several films earlier. The duo will be colloborating for yet another interesting project. Ramesh, who will be playing the lead role in the film, plans to get a new talent from his team to direct the film. "This year, Ramesh is keen to take up more acting assignments. His agenda is to get more on the creative side and design the whole film while he introduces some young and talented filmmakers from his team to direct a film. The first attempt will be made with the film produced by Sandesh Nagaraj," says a source close to the actor-director,

Meanwhile, Ramesh is waiting to release his directorial project, *100*, but he has decided to go ahead only after the government permits 100 per cent occupancy in theatres. The film, made by Suraj Productions, also has him playing the lead role. It also stars Rachita Ram and Poorna. Ramesh's immediate next project to go on floors will be the sequel to *Shivaji Surathkal*. Directed by Akash Srivatsa, it is currently in the preparation stage, and Ramesh, who is all set to take charge as an investigative officer again, is working on the looks of the character.

Ramesh Aravind

Nikhil Dwivedi's next titled *1971*

CE FEATURES

ACTOR-producer Nikhil Dwivedi has announced his next home production, *1971*, which is based on the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war and the liberation of Bangladesh.

Nikhil, who has previously produced films such as *Veere Di Wedding* and *Dabangg 3*, said the aim behind 1971 was to showcase a "real war film" to the audience.

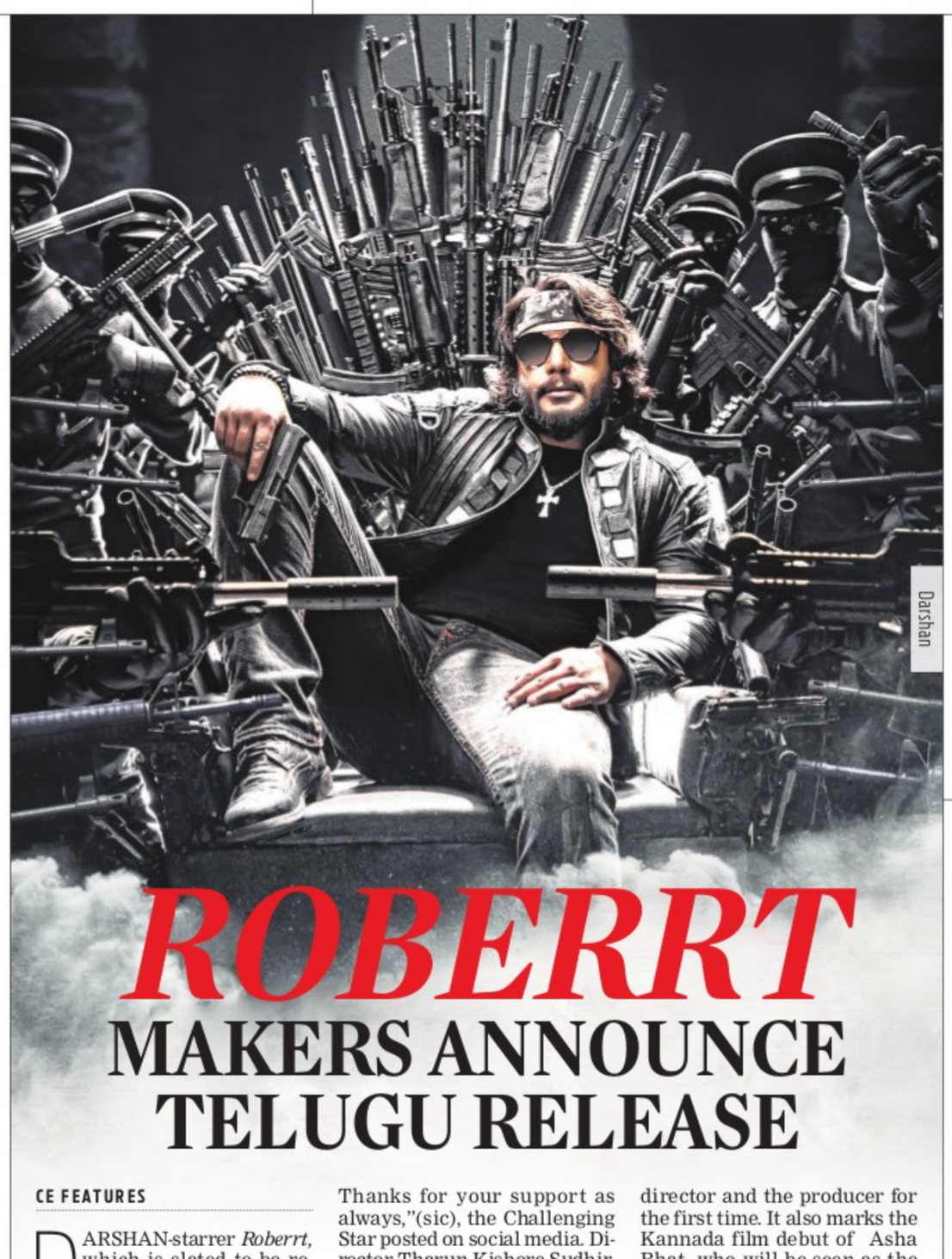
"We plan to show the event as is, right from a historian's textbook to celluloid. My attempt would be to make it as real and authentic as possible, without any jingoism. We want to design it as per international standards," Dwivedi said in a statement.

The film will also focus on Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India and Sam Maneckshaw, who was the Chief of the Army staff during the war.

"*1971* will show both of them worked in complete sync to lead India to one of the most emphatic victories in the post-modern world. It was as much as a political and diplomatic war as much as it was fought by the armed forces," Dwivedi added.

The makers are currently finalising the cast for the film, post which, the war drama will hit the floors

Nikhil Dwivedi



Darshan

ROBERRT MAKERS ANNOUNCE TELUGU RELEASE

CE FEATURES

DARSHAN-starrer *Roberrt,* which is slated to be released on March 11, is also coming out in Telugu, and the news was officially announced on Republic Day with the unveiling of a fresh poster. "Happy Republic Day to all the Indians residing across the globe. *#Roberrt* is all set to hit the theatres on #March11 in Kannada and Telugu Languages. Thanks for your support as always,"(sic), the Challenging Star posted on social media. Director Tharun Kishore Sudhir, who announced the release in two languages, also revealed that a teaser in Telugu will come in the coming days. As soon as Darshan made the announcement, wishes poured in from Kannada and Telugu cinegoers.

Roberrt, produced by Umapathy S, brings together the actor, director and the producer for the first time. It also marks the Kannada film debut of Asha Bhat, who will be seen as the female lead, while Aishwarya Prasad and Sonal Monteiro play pivotal roles. The film has music by Arjun Janya and camerawork by Sudhakar S Raj. The ensemble cast also consists of Jagapati Babu, Vinod Prabhakar, Ravi Kishan, Chikkanna, Shivaraj KR Pete, and others.

Warner Bros denies reports of *Harry Potter* series in development at HBO Max

CE FEATURES

WARNER Bros and HBO Max have denied reports of a *Harry Potter* series in early development at the streaming platform.

Earlier, multiple media reports stated that a spin-off is in early development. However, Warner Bros have released a statement denying the reports. "There are no 'Harry Potter' series in development at the studio or on the streaming platform," read the statement.

The *Harry Potter* is one of the most popular movie franchises and book series. The seven-book series from J K Rowling sold over 500 million copies worldwide and the immense popularity of the potter-world led to the eight-film franchise, which grossed over $8 billion worldwide.

Post the 2011's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2*, two more films were released as a part of the *Fantastic Beasts* film series that stands as a prequel to the earlier *Harry Potter* films.

The third of the five planned films in the *Fantastic Beasts* series is scheduled to be out by 2022.

Euphoria season 2 to restart filming in March

CE FEATURES

HBO's *Euphoria* will continue its season two productions in 2021.

Sam Levinson, the creator of the show, has confirmed that the show is likely to be filmed and released in 2021. Season two premiered earlier this month with two episodes - both of which were filmed during the pandemic.

The production of the show was originally slated to begin in March 2020, but was pushed back due to the pandemic. The first season aired in 2019 and centered around Zendaya's character Rue. The second season follows Rue's love interest Jules (Hunter Schafer). Levinson, in an interview with Indiewire stated that the production will begin in March 2021.

However, Levinson remains hesitant about whether the season 2 episodes will end up releasing this year, and said that he hopes to release them as soon as possible.

Misha Green to helm *Tomb Raider 2*

CE FEATURES

LOVECRAFT Country creator Misha Green is set to helm MGM's upcoming *Tomb Raider* sequel starring Alicia Vikander.

Tomb Raider 2 will mark Green feature directorial debut, reports Variety.

Vikander had played the role of protagonist Lara Croft in the Roar Uthaug-directed first part, which was written by Captain Marvel writer Geneva Robertson-Dworet, and raked in over $270 million at the global box office.

Green will also pen the film's script, which will be bankrolled by Graham King's GK Films banner and The Cantillon Company.

Demi Lovato to star in comedy series about food issues

CE FEATURES

ACTOR and singer Demi Lovato is all set to star in a comedy series about friends with food issues.

Titled *Hungry*, the series will revolve around friends in a food issues group. Entertainment Weekly reported that the friends "help each other as they look for love, success and the perfect thing in the fridge that's going to make it all better." Lovato will also serve as the executive producer of the series. Hot In Cleveland creator and Will & Grace writer Suzanne Martin will write the series and also executive producer it with Lovato. Lovato, who has been vocal about recovering from an eating disorder, had earlier starred in the *Camp Rock films* and in *Sonny With A Chance* series. In 2020, Lovato had a recurring role on *Will & Grace*.

Demi Lovato